

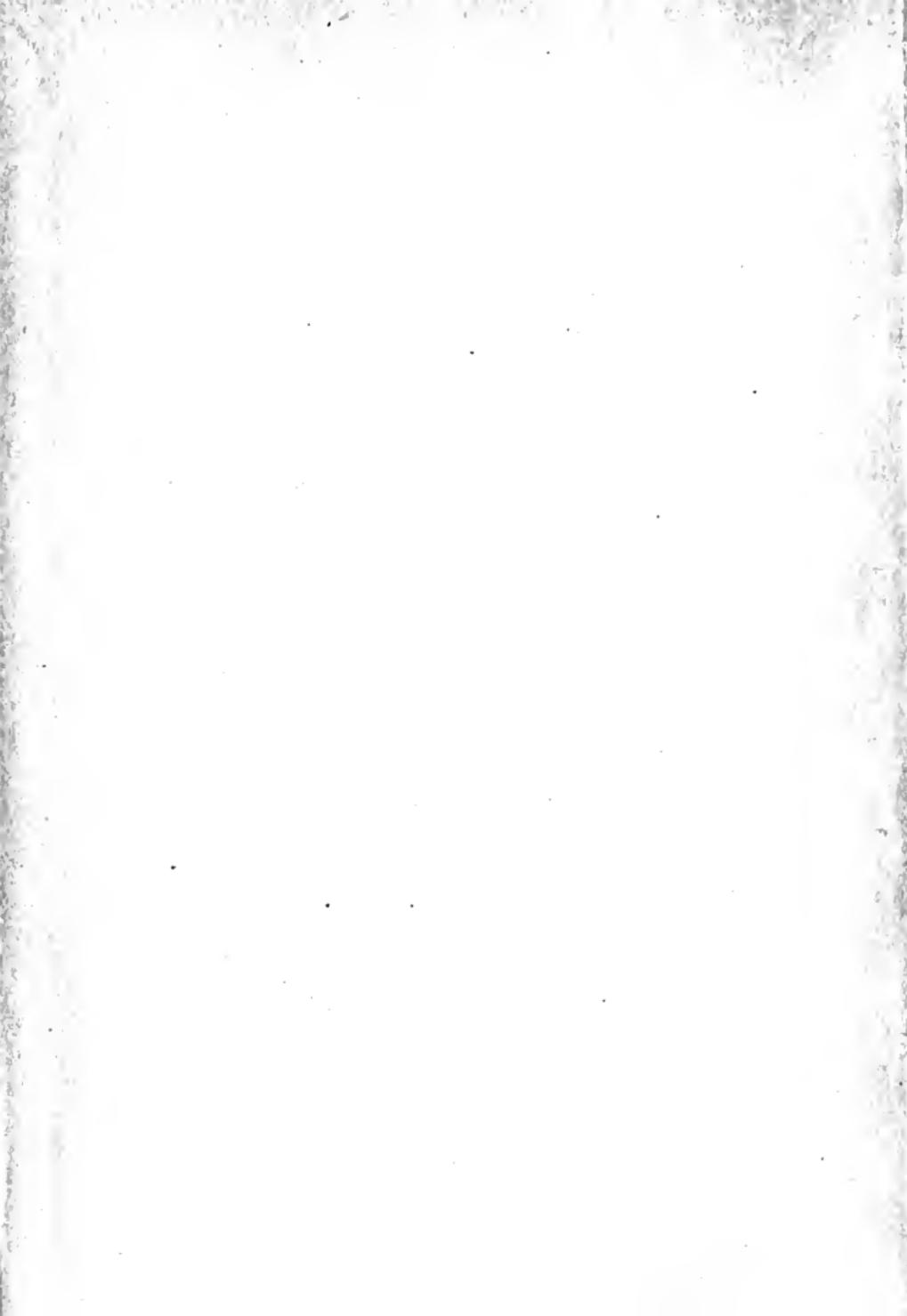




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John Keats.

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SELECTIONS FROM
THE POEMS OF
JOHN KEATS
& PERCY BYSSHE
SHELLEY



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EDITED BY
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INTRODUCTION

WHEN we read a play or a story poem we do not usually concern ourselves about the writer unless he is an actor in his own story. But when we read a lyric (*i.e.* a song poem), or an ode or elegy we usually gain more or less insight into the mind and emotions of the poet. It matters little that we know only a few facts about Shakespeare, but we want to know as much as possible about Keats and Shelley and the times in which they lived, for these two poets write very largely about themselves.

JOHN KEATS

John Keats was born in 1795, his father being manager of a livery stable at "The Swan and Hoop," Finsbury Pavement, London. The father has been described as a man of "common sense and native respectability," was said to be a West-Countryman and was killed by a fall from his horse when John, the eldest of a family of five, was about nine years old. The mother, "tall, vivacious, talented, and pleasure-loving, resembled John in the face and apparently favoured him and was passionately loved by him." She survived her husband only six years and the orphans were put under the care of guardians.

The three boys went to school at Enfield, and the

son of their schoolmaster, Charles Cowden Clarke, became Keats's friend, though he was older by seven years. "By him and other contemporaries the boy was remembered as a favourite at school, handsome, vivacious, high-minded, generous, fearless, of an ungovernable temper and fond of fighting, but very tender with passions of tears and of outrageous laughter."¹

At the age of fifteen he was apprenticed to an Edmonton surgeon, but his real life was spent in the land of romance. He read eagerly the works of poets, historians, travellers, studied classical myths,² tried his hand at translation and wrote verse which was more or less doggerel. Meanwhile he studied at the great London hospitals and qualified for an appointment as dresser at Guy's, where he performed his duties with credit but without distinction. The real bent of his mind is shown by the following incident. One night in 1815, he and Cowden Clarke sat together until morning reading Chapman's translation of Homer. Then Keats went home and wrote the sonnet printed on page 42 of this book, entitled *On Reading Chapman's*

¹ Edward Thomas.

² He read much in classical dictionaries, which may appear, at first sight, to be a barren field. "In Lemprière's classical dictionary," writes Thomas, "he would read how Orion rid Chios of wild beasts in order to gain the king's daughter Hero, and how the king made him drunk and put out his eyes as he lay asleep on the seashore, and how Orion, putting a man on his back to guide him, went to where he could turn his eyes towards the east, and how the rising sun gave him back his sight. Keats, merely for a comparison, made the lines:

Like old Deucalion mountain'd o'er the flood,
Or blind Orion hungry for the morn."

Homer, which was sent to his friend in time for breakfast. "This sonnet is perhaps the finest," writes a critic, "almost certainly the loftiest, of all poems having a book for their subject and confessedly inspired by reading."

After that the lancet was forsaken for the pen. The young poet roamed freely about the country and travelled in Scotland, always with congenial friends, gathering impressions of "man and Nature and of human life," which he expressed in the most musical and beautiful of language. Even when writing some classical story his mind's eye is full of the beauty of English woods, meadows, streams and moorlands, trees, blossoms, birds and fishes. His metaphors and similes are drawn from the same sweet source.—"The open sky," he writes in one place, "sits on our senses like a sapphire crown; the air is our robe of state; the earth is our throne, and the sea a mighty minstrel playing before it."

The poet was, however, no brooding visionary. He had the great gift of friendship and delighted to share with his two brothers, his sister Fanny and his many friends, his exquisite enjoyment of the sights and sounds of the English countryside.—"O there is nothing like fine weather, and health and books, and a fine country, and a contented mind, and a diligent habit of reading and thinking, and an amulet against ennui—and please heaven a little claret wine cool out of a cellar a mile deep—with a few or a good many ratafia cakes—a rocky basin to bathe in, a strawberry bed to say your prayers to Flora in, a pad nag to go you ten miles or so; two or three sensible people to chat with; two or three spiteful folks to spar with; two or three odd fishes to

laugh at; and two or three numskulls to argue with
—instead of using dumb-bells on a rainy day:—

Two or three Posies
With two or three simples—
Two or three Noses
With two or three pimples—
Two or three wise men
And two or three ninnys—
Two or three purses
And two or three guineas . . . ”

The shorter poems of Keats are full of reminders of his friendships—with Leigh Hunt, the painter B. R. Haydon, who was the means of England acquiring the Elgin Marbles, Mungo Park, the African traveller, Landseer, the painter of the “lower animals,” Wordsworth, Charles Lamb, Tom Hood, the artist Joseph Severn, and especially John Hamilton Reynolds, an insurance clerk, but a wit and a poet of no mean order. Another friend was William Hazlitt, while he had some acquaintance with Coleridge.

The first book of poems was published in 1871, when the poet was twenty-one. It did not attract much attention, except among his relatives and friends, but it contained such things as the sonnets on Chapman’s Homer and the Elgin Marbles. Meanwhile he had begun something more ambitious. He was a deep admirer of *The Faerie Queene*, *Paradise Lost*, and *The Excursion*, and thought no one worthy of the name of poet who had not a long narrative poem to his credit. So he wrote *Endymion*, which, however, became not a narrative poem but a kind of spiritual allegory of the

poetic development that he had planned for himself; which is supremely difficult to read by anyone seeking a connected story, but is also full of some of the loveliest lines and passages which have ever been penned by any poet of any age or clime. Its chief beauty lies in the descriptions of natural things, and some of the most noteworthy passages are quoted in this book (see page 86).

His next attempt at a narrative poem was *Isabella, or the Pot of Basil*, in which beauties of image and expression are made more subordinate to the story, which he drew from the Italian poet Boccaccio. Then came another story poem, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, "the most perfect thing of its kind written by Keats, or any other poet." Portions of *Isabella* and *St. Agnes* are given in this volume in the hope that the reading of them will encourage the student to study the complete poems. Another narrative poem, *Lamia*, a tale of a young Corinthian who married a serpent-woman, written in 1819, shows that Keats could tell a story in verse which was perfect in form and could present it in a dress of rich and wonderful beauty. Keats is perhaps at his highest in his odes—*To Psyche*, *To Autumn*, *On Melancholy*, *On a Grecian Urn*—these poems are full of unforgettable things as well as of intimate revelations of the poet's own mind. "To make beauty," writes Dr. Bradley, "was his philanthropy."

A volume published in 1820 concludes with a fragment of a narrative poem entitled *Hyperion* which he re-wrote because he was displeased with the first attempt. It fails as *Endymion* fails because Keats could

not describe action but only still life. It is, however, full of beauties of the kind with which we have already identified him. The setting in which he places his heathen divinities is neither divine nor superhuman, but in the best sense "of the earth and speaketh of the earth." His Saturn is a more or less dignified old man—"a venerable antique king of Lear's stature," occasionally descending to a querulous old villager chanting a litany "of the times that were."

Keats was now living in Hampstead, near the beginning of his fatal illness and passionately in love with a girl of eighteen named Fanny Brawne. It was in September, 1820, when on a voyage to Italy, that he wrote his last sonnet (which is printed in this book—see page 100) on the page facing *A Lover's Complaint* in his copy of Shakespeare. He spent some time in Naples and then went on to Rome, where he lingered for a few miserable weeks, dying of consumption on the 23rd of February, 1821. He was buried in the English cemetery of the Eternal City.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Keats refused to visit Shelley in England and rejected an invitation to join him in Italy. Shelley's attitude to Keats is shown in *Adonais*, one of the few supremely beautiful elegies in English literature. Shelley was three years Keats's senior, having been born in 1792, when the French Revolution was well upon its way. He was the heir of Sir Timothy Shelley, of Field Place,

Sussex, a Tory squire and Member of Parliament in an age of reaction. He has been described as "a mischievous, lovable lad, of independent, energetic, generous disposition, with large beautiful blue eyes, long bushy hair, delicate features and strong, slender figure." Another says that his whole appearance "breathed an animation, a fire, an enthusiasm, a vivid and preternatural intelligence." He was sent to Eton, which he disliked largely because the fagging system was repugnant to his love of freedom and independence. He went up to Oxford in 1808 full of revolt against the existing state of society and by no means inclined to hide his disgust; and although he read diligently, if not always on the prescribed lines, he was soon in conflict with the authorities, and having published a pamphlet on *The Necessity of Atheism*, he was dismissed. He went up to London with his friend and later biographer, Thomas Jefferson Hogg, and his father having withdrawn his allowance he promptly married a girl of nineteen named Harriet Westbrook. Then he crossed from Scotland—his marriage had taken place in Edinburgh—and threw his fierce energy into the cause of Catholic Emancipation. His first child, Ianthe, was born in June, 1813, and the second, a boy, was born in Bath in 1814. His wife seems to have been indifferent to the children, to whom Shelley was devoted, and after a period of estrangement they agreed to separate. Shelley had fallen in love with Mary Godwin and left London with her as soon as the separation had been arranged. Two years later Harriet Shelley drowned herself. The poet then married Mary Godwin and

tried to get the custody of his children, but the Lord Chancellor decreed that he was "unfitted for parental responsibilities." He then left England and spent the last four years of his life chiefly in Italy with his friends Byron and Leigh Hunt. One day he set out from Leghorn in a small frail boat named the *Ariel*, which was soon lost in a rising fog. Nothing more was seen of the little craft, and two months later the poet's body and that of a friend named Williams were recovered. When Byron and Leigh Hunt had reached the spot, the body was cremated on the shore, and the ashes, having been collected, were buried in Rome.

Shelley's poetry, like his own career, breathes the spirit of passionate revolt against life as he found it. He felt that he had a mission to renovate the world, to usher in Utopia where liberty and love should be the dominant principles of existence. To him liberty meant freedom from external restraint and love a transcendental force kindling all things into beauty. He is therefore, unlike Keats, a professed reformer, and occasionally used his poetic gifts to give expression to his ideas and ideals of social revolution—as in *Queen Mab* and *The Revolt of Islam*. The former is a rather tedious rhapsody which tells how the spirit of Ianthe is carried to the outermost bounds of the universe and shown the past, present, and future of humanity. Tyrants are shown writhing upon their thrones, the "wandering Jew" makes his appearance, and the final triumph of reason is foreshadowed. In *The Revolt of Islam*, the longest of his poems, he is "a trumpet that sings to battle," the struggle between evil and

good which to Shelley meant the forces of authority and man's freedom from personal restraint. But neither of these poems is poetry.

In *Alastor, the Spirit of Solitude* he tries to sketch the emotional history of a young and beautiful poet. It has many elaborate descriptions of scenery and a slight narrative framework and is full of pity over what the poet felt to be his own destiny.

In his next great poem, *Prometheus Unbound*, he borrows to some extent from Æschylus, who, in his *Prometheus Bound*, represents Zeus as a usurper in heaven who has supplanted an older and milder divine dynasty, while the Titan Prometheus, chained to Caucasus with a vulture gnawing his liver, is the holder of a secret on which the power of Zeus depends. But Shelley extends the spiritual significance of Prometheus, representing him as "one warring with the Evil Principle, oppressed not only by it, but by all—even the good who are deluded into thinking evil a necessary portion of humanity; a victim full of fortitude and hope and the spirit of triumph, emanating from a reliance in the ultimate omnipotence of good."

"On the whole," writes a commentator, "*Prometheus* has been over-praised, perhaps, because the beauty of the interspersed songs has dazzled the critics. Not only are the personages too transparently allegorical, but the allegory is insipid; especially tactless is the treatment of the marriage between Prometheus, the Spirit of Humanity, and Asia, the Spirit of Nature, as a romantic love affair." Shelley, like Keats, could not treat super-human beings with the majesty of a Milton. The

composition of the short drama of *Hellas* was prompted by Shelley's sympathy with the Greeks in their revolt against the Turks. It is full of poetic beauties and a certain pensive sadness relieved by hopefulness for the future of the world.

The third drama of *The Cenci* was actually written for the stage. It is a tragedy dealing with Beatrice Cenci, the daughter of a Roman patrician house, and the subject of one of Guido Reni's best-known paintings, who in 1599 was put to death with her brother and stepmother for the murder of her father, a monster of cruelty and vice who drove his daughter to murder by his crimes. More than one critic has called *The Sensitive Plant* Shelley's greatest poem. It describes a beautiful garden in which the flowers rejoice in one another's loveliness, except the Sensitive Plant which has "no bright flower, radiance and odour," and which yet "desires what it has not, the beautiful." Now there was "a power in this sweet place, an Eve in this Eden," a lady who tended the flowers throughout the spring and summer and then died. The power of evil is now triumphant. Corruption and decay possess the garden, cruel frost comes and snow and "a northern whirlwind like a wolf," and

When Winter had gone and Spring came back
The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck;
But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and docks, and
darnels,
Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels.

The epilogue appears to suggest the eternal nature of

"love and beauty and delight"; but the meaning of the poem does not lie on the surface.

When John Keats was sent to Italy with the hope of saving his life, Shelley offered him a home and wished to tend him in his sickness. As we have already noted, Keats refused the offer through a hypersensitive feeling that his brother poet and social superior was offering him a helping hand in a spirit of patronage. The two poets were never really friends, so that Shelley's *Adonais*, *An Elegy on the Death of John Keats*, is not an outpouring of personal sorrow, but it is filled with wonderful beauty both of thought and expression, and contains many unforgettable lines:

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
He hath awakened from the dream of life—
'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife.

Shelley's shorter poems include some of the best-known pieces in English literature, and many of them are included in this volume. The poet's three main themes are social reform, Nature, and love or, one might say, universal benevolence of an intellectual kind—"couples of lovers, isolated in bowers of bliss, reading Plato and eating vegetables." Through all the poems runs a strain of melancholy, of frustrated hope which in some degree appears to constitute their charm. As he says in the *Skylark*,

Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.
There are rapturous dreams of freedom, trumpet-calls to liberty, beautiful descriptions of Nature, wonderful

flights of fancy and imagination, and cadences of entrancing sweetness.

Of all his verse [writes a critic] it is his songs about nature and love that everyone knows and loves best. And, in fact, many of them seem to satisfy what is perhaps the ultimate test of true poetry: they sometimes have the power, which makes poetry akin to music, of suggesting by means of words something which cannot possibly be expressed in words.

But:—

It is only afterwards that we ask ourselves whether there is anything beyond the mere delight; and realizing that, though we have been rapt far above the earth, we have had no disturbing glimpses of infinity, we are left with a slight flatness of disappointment.



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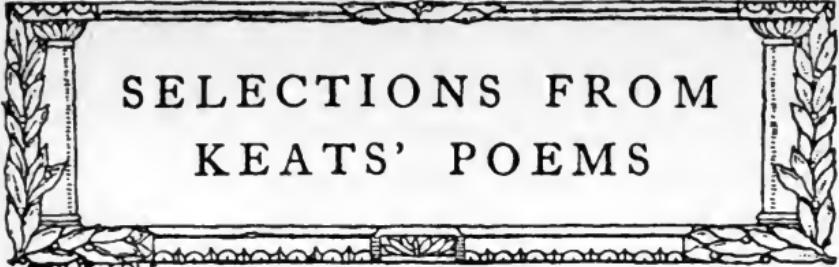


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SELECTIONS FROM
KEATS' POEMS

DEDICATION TO LEIGH HUNT, ESQ.

GLORY and Loveliness have pass'd away;
For if we wander out in early morn,
No wreathed incense do we see upborne
Into the east to meet the smiling day:
No crowd of nymphs soft-voiced and young and gay,
In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,
Roses, and pinks, and violets, to adorn
The shrine of Flora in her early May.
But there are left delights as high as these.
And I shall ever bless my destiny,
That in a time when under pleasant trees
Pan is no longer sought, I feel a free,
A leafy luxury, seeing I could please,
With these poor offerings, a man like thee.



SELECTIONS FROM KEATS' POEMS

"I STOOD TIP-TOE UPON A LITTLE HILL"

Places of nestling green for poets made.

—*Story of Rimini.*

I STOOD tip-toe upon a little hill,
The air was cooling, and so very still,
That the sweet buds which with a modest pride
Pull droopingly, in slanting curve aside,
Their scantily-leaved, and finely-tapering stems,
Had not yet lost their starry diadems
Caught from the early sobbing of the morn.
The clouds were pure and white as flocks new-shorn,
And fresh from the clear brook; sweetly they slept
On the blue fields of heaven, and then there crept
A little noiseless noise among the leaves,
Born of the very sigh that silence heaves:
For not the faintest motion could be seen
Of all the shades that slanted o'er the green.
There was wide wand'ring for the greediest eye,
To peer about upon variety;
Far round the horizon's crystal air to skim,
And trace the dwindled edgings of its brim;
To picture out the quaint, and curious bending
Of the fresh woodland alley never-ending;
Or by the bowery clefts, and leafy shelves,

Guess where the jaunty streams refresh themselves.
I gazed awhile, and felt as light and free
As though the fanning wings of Mercury
Had play'd upon my heels: I was light-hearted,
And many pleasures to my vision started;
So I straightway began to pluck a posy
Of luxuries bright, milky, soft, and rosy.
A bush of May-flowers with the bees about them;
Ah, sure no tasteful nook would be without them;
And let a lush laburnum oversweep them,
And let long grass grow round the roots, to keep them
Moist, cool, and green; and shade the violets,
That they may bind the moss in leafy nets.

A filbert hedge with wildbriar overtwined,
And clumps of woodbine taking the soft wind
Upon their summer thrones; there too should be
The frequent chequer of a youngling tree,
That with a score of light green brethren shoots
From the quaint mossiness of aged roots:
Round which is heard a spring-head of clear waters,
Babbling so wildly of its lovely daughters,
The spreading blue-bells: it may haply mourn
That such fair clusters should be rudely torn
From their fresh beds, and scatter'd thoughtlessly
By infant hands, left on the path to die.

Open afresh your round of starry folds,
Ye ardent marigolds!
Dry up the moisture from your golden lids,
For great Apollo bids

That in these days your praises should be sung
On many harps, which he has lately strung;
And when again your dewiness he kisses,
Tell him, I have you in my world of blisses:
So haply when I rove in some far vale,
His mighty voice may come upon the gale.

Here are sweet peas, on tip-toe for a flight
With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate white,
And taper fingers catching at all things,
To bind them all about with tiny rings.
Linger awhile upon some bending planks
That lean against a streamlet's rushy banks,
And watch intently Nature's gentle doings:
They will be found softer than ringdoves' cooings.
How silent comes the water round that bend!
Not the minutest whisper does it send
To the o'erhanging sallows: blades of grass
Slowly across the chequer'd shadows pass.
Why, you might read two sonnets, ere they reach
To where the hurrying freshnesses aye preach
A natural sermon o'er their pebbly beds;
Where swarms of minnows show their little heads,
Staying their wavy bodies 'gainst the streams,
To taste the luxury of sunny beams
Temper'd with coolness. How they ever wrestle
With their own sweet delight, and ever nestle
Their silver bellies on the pebbly sand!
If you but scantily hold out the hand,
That very instant not one will remain;
But turn your eye, and they are there again.

The ripples seem right glad to reach those cresses,
And cool themselves among the em'rald tresses;
The while they cool themselves, they freshness give,
And moisture, that the bowery green may live:
So keeping up an interchange of favours,
Like good men in the truth of their behaviours.
Sometimes goldfinches one by one will drop
From low-hung branches: little space they stop.
But sip, and twitter, and their feathers sleek;
Then off at once, as in a wanton freak:
Or perhaps, to show their black and golden wings,
Pausing upon their yellow flutterings.
Were I in such a place, I sure should pray
That nought less sweet might call my thoughts away,
Than the soft rustle of a maiden's gown
Fanning away the dandelion's down;
Than the light music of her nimble toes
Patting against the sorrel as she goes.
How she would start, and blush, thus to be caught
Playing in all her innocence of thought!
O let me lead her gently o'er the brook,
Watch her half-smiling lips and downward look;
O let me for one moment touch her wrist;
Let me one moment to her breathing list;
And as she leaves me, may she often turn
Her fair eyes looking through her locks auburn.
What next? a tuft of evening primroses,
O'er which the mind may hover till it dozes;
O'er which it well might take a pleasant sleep,
But that 'tis ever startled by the leap
Of buds into ripe flowers; or by the flitting

Of divers moths, that aye their rest are quitting;
Or by the moon lifting her silver rim
Above a cloud, and with a gradual swim
Coming into the blue with all her light.
O Maker of sweet poets! dear delight
Of this fair world and all its gentle livers;
Spangler of clouds, halo of crystal rivers,
Mingler with leaves, and dew and tumbling streams,
Closer of lovely eyes to lovely dreams,
Lover of loneliness, and wandering,
Of upcast eye, and tender pondering!
Thee must I praise above all other glories
That smile us on to tell delightful stories.
For what has made the sage or poet write
But the fair paradise of Nature's light?
In the calm grandeur of a sober line,
We see the waving of the mountain pine:
And when a tale is beautifully staid,
We feel the safety of a hawthorn glade:
When it is moving on luxurious wings,
The soul is lost in pleasant smotherings:
Fairy dewy roses brush against our faces,
And flowering laurels spring from diamond vases;
O'erhead we see the jasmine and sweetbriar,
And bloomy grapes laughing from green attire,
While at our feet, the voice of crystal bubbles
Charms us at once away from all our troubles:
So that we feel uplifted from the world,
Walking upon the white clouds wreath'd and curl'd.
So felt he, who first told how Psyche went
On the smooth wind to realms of wonderment;

What Psyche felt, and Love, when their full lips
First touch'd; what amorous and fondling nips
They gave each other's cheeks; with all their sighs,
And how they kist each other's tremulous eyes:
The silver lamp,—the ravishment—the wonder—
The darkness—loneliness—the fearful thunder;
Their woes gone by, and both to heaven upflown,
To bow for gratitude before Jove's throne.
So did he feel, who pull'd the boughs aside,
That we might look into a forest wide,
To catch a glimpse of Fauns and Dryades
Coming with softest rustle through the trees;
And garlands woven of flowers wild, and sweet,
Upheld on ivory wrists, or sporting feet:
Telling us how fair, trembling Syrinx fled
Arcadian Pan, with such a fearful dread.
Poor nymph,—poor Pan,—how he did weep to find
Naught but a lovely sighing of the wind
Along the reedy stream! a half-heard strain,
Full of sweet desolation—balmy pain.

What first inspir'd a bard of old to sing
Narcissus pining o'er the untainted spring
In some delicious ramble, he had found
A little space, with boughs all woven round;
And in the midst of all, a clearer pool
Than e'er reflected in its pleasant cool
The blue sky, here and there serenely peeping,
Through tendril wreaths fantastically creeping.
And on the bank a lonely flower he spied,
A meek and forlorn flower, with nought of pride,

Drooping its beauty o'er the watery clearness,
To woo its own sad image into nearness:
Deaf to light Zephyrus, it would not move;
But still would seem to droop, to pine, to love.
So while the poet stood in this sweet spot,
Some fainter gleamings o'er his fancy shot;
Nor was it long ere he had told the tale
Of young Narcissus, and sad Echo's bale.

Where had he been, from whose warm head outflew
That sweetest of all songs, that ever new,
That aye refreshing, pure deliciousness,
Coming ever to bless
The wanderer by moonlight? to him bringing
Shapes from the invisible world, unearthly singing
From out the middle air, from flowery nests,
And from the pillowy silkiness that rests
Full in the speculation of the stars.
Ah! surely he had burst our mortal bars:
Into some wond'rous region he had gone,
To search for thee, divine Endymion!

He was a Poet, sure a lover too,
Who stood on Latmus' top, what time there blew
Soft breezes from the myrtle vale below:
And brought, in faintness solemn, sweet and slow,
A hymn from Dian's temple; while upswelling,
The incense went to her own starry dwelling.
But though her face was clear as infant's eyes,
Though she stood smiling o'er the sacrifice,
The Poet wept at her so piteous fate,

Wept that such beauty should be desolate:
So in fine wrath some golden sounds he won,
And gave meek Cynthia her Endymion.

Queen of the wide air; thou most lovely queen
Of all the brightness that mine eyes have seen!
As thou exceedest all things in thy shine,
So every tale, does this sweet tale of thine.
O for three words of honey, that I might
Tell but one wonder of thy bridal night!

Where distant ships do seem to show their keels,
Phœbus awhile delay'd his mighty wheels,
And turn'd to smile upon thy bashful eyes,
Ere he his unseen pomp would solemnise.
The evening weather was so bright, and clear,
That men of health were of unusual cheer;
Stepping like Homer at the trumpet's call,
Or young Apollo on the pedestal:
And lovely women were as fair and warm
As Venus looking sideways in alarm.
The breezes were ethereal, and pure,
And crept through half-closed lattices to cure
The languid sick; it cooled their fever'd sleep,
And soothed them into slumbers full and deep.
Soon they awoke clear-eyed: nor burned with thirsting,
Nor with hot fingers, nor with temples bursting:
And springing up, they met the wond'ring sight
Of their dear friends, nigh foolish with delight;
Who eel their arms, and breasts, and kiss, and stare,
And on their placid foreheads part the hair.

Young men and maidens at each other gazed,
With hands held back, and motionless, amazed
To see the brightness in each other's eyes;
And so they stood, fill'd with a sweet surprise,
Until their tongues were loosed in poesy.
Therefore no lover did of anguish die:
But the soft numbers, in that moment spoken,
Made silken ties, that never may be broken.
Cynthia! I cannot tell the greater blisses
That follow'd thine, and thy dear shepherd's kisses:
Was there a poet born?—but now no more—
My wand'ring spirit must no farther soar.

TO MY BROTHER GEORGE

FULL many a dreary hour have I past
My brain bewilder'd, and my mind o'ercast
With heaviness; in seasons when I've thought
No sphery strains by me could e'er be caught
From the blue dome, though I to dimness gaze
On the far depth where sheeted lightning plays;
Or, on the wavy grass outstretch'd supinely,
Pry 'mong the stars, to strive to think divinely:
That I should never hear Apollo's song,
Though feathery clouds were floating all along
The purple west, and, two bright streaks between,
The golden lyre itself were dimly seen:
That the still murmur of the honey-bee
Would never teach a rural song to me:

That the bright glance from beauty's eyelids slanting,
Would never make a lay of mine enchanting,
Or warm my breast with ardour to unfold
Some tale of love and arms in time of old.

But there are times, when those that love the bay,
Fly from all sorrowing far, far away;
A sudden glow comes on them, nought they see
In water, earth, or air, but poesy.
It has been said, dear George, and true I hold it
(For knightly Spenser to *Libertas* told it),
That when a poet is in such a trance,
In air he sees white coursers paw and prance,
Bestridden of gay knights, in gay apparel,
Who at each other tilt in playful quarrel;
And what we, ignorantly, sheet-lightning call,
Is the swift opening of their wide portal,
When the bright warder blows his trumpet clear,
Whose tones reach nought on earth but poet's ear,
When these enchanted portals open wide,
And through the light the horsemen swiftly glide,
The Poet's eye can reach those golden halls,
And view the glory of their festivals:
Their ladies fair, that in the distance seem
Fit for the silvering of a seraph's dream;
Their rich brimmed goblets, that incessant run,
Like the bright spots that move about the sun;
And when upheld, the wine from each bright jar
Pours with the lustre of a falling star.
Yet further off are dimly seen their bowers,
Of which no mortal eye can reach the flowers;

And 'tis right just, for well Apollo knows
 'Twould make the Poet quarrel with the rose.
 All that's reveal'd from that far seat of blisses,
 Is, the clear fountains' interchanging kisses,
 As gracefully descending, light and thin,
 Like silver streaks across a dolphin's fin,
 When he upswimmeth from the coral caves,
 And sports with half his tail above the waves.

These wonders strange he sees, and many more,
 Whose head is pregnant with poetic lore:
 Should he upon an evening ramble fare
 With forehead to the soothing breezes bare,
 Would he nought see but the dark, silent blue,
 With all its diamonds trembling through and through?
 Or the coy moon, when in the waviness
 Of whitest clouds she does her beauty dress,
 And staidly paces higher up, and higher,
 Like a sweet nun in holiday attire?
 Ah, yes! much more would start into his sight—
 The revelries and mysteries of night:
 And should I ever see them, I will tell you
 Such tales as needs must with amazement spell you.

These are the living pleasures of the bard:
 But richer far posterity's award.
 What does he murmur with his latest breath,
 While his proud eye looks through the film of death?
 "What though I leave this dull and earthly mould,
 Yet shall my spirit lofty converse hold
 With after times.—The patriot shall feel

My stern alarum, and unsheathe his steel;
Or in the senate thunder out my numbers,
To startle princes from their easy slumbers.
The sage will mingle with each moral theme
My happy thoughts sententious: he will teem
With lofty periods when my verses fire him,
And then I'll stoop from heaven to inspire him.
Lays have I left of such a dear delight
That maids will sing them on their bridal-night;
Gay villagers, upon a morn of May,
When they have tired their gentle limbs with play,
And form'd a snowy circle on the grass,
And plac'd in midst of all that lovely lass
Who chosen is their queen,—with her fine head
Crowned with flowers purple, white and red:
For there the lily and the musk-rose sighing,
Are emblems true of hapless lovers dying:
Between her breasts, that never yet felt trouble,
A bunch of violets full blown, and double,
Serenely sleep:—she from a casket takes
A little book,—and then a joy awakes
About each youthful heart,—with stifled cries,
And rubbing of white hands, and sparkling eyes:
For she's to read a tale of hopes and fears:
One that I fostered in my youthful years:
The pearls, that on each glistening circlet sleep,
Gush ever and anon with silent creep,
Lured by the innocent dimples. To sweet rest
Shall the dear babe, upon its mother's breast,
Be lull'd with songs of mine. Fair world, adieu!
Thy dales and hills are fading from my view:

Swiftly I mount, upon wide-spreading pinions,
Far from the narrow bounds of thy dominions.
Full joy I feel, while thus I cleave the air,
That my soft verse will charm thy daughters fair,
And warm thy sons!" Ah, my dear friend and brother,
Could I, at once, my mad ambition smother,
For tasting joys like these, sure I should be
Happier, and dearer to society.

At times, 'tis true, I've felt relief from pain
When some bright thought has darted through my brain:
Through all that day I've felt a greater pleasure
Than if I'd brought to light a hidden treasure.
As to my sonnets, though none else should heed them,
I feel delighted, still, that you should read them.
Of late, too, I have had much calm enjoyment,
Stretch'd on the grass at my best-loved employment
Of scribbling lines for you. These things I thought
While, in my face, the freshest breeze I caught.
E'en now I am pillow'd on a bed of flowers
That crowns a lofty cliff, which proudly towers
Above the ocean waves. The stalks and blades
Chequer my tablet with their quivering shades.
On one side is a field of drooping oats,
Through which the poppies show their scarlet coats
So pert and useless, that they bring to mind
The scarlet-coats that pester humankind.
And on the other side, outspread, is seen
Ocean's blue mantle, streak'd with purple and green!
Now, 'tis I see a canvass'd ship, and now
Mark the bright silver curling round her prow;
I see the lark down-dropping to his nest,

And the broad-wing'd sea-gull never at rest;
For when no more he spreads his feathers free,
His breast is dancing on the restless sea.
Now I direct my eyes into the west,
Which at this moment is in sunbeams drest:
Why westward turn? 'Twas but to say adieu!
'Twas but to kiss my hand, dear George, to you!

TO CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE

OFT have you seen a swan superbly frowning,
And with proud breast his own white shadow crowning;
He slants his neck beneath the waters bright
So silently, it seems a beam of light
Come from the galaxy: anon he sports,—
With outspread wings the Naiad Zephyr courts,
Or ruffles all the surface of the lake
In striving from its crystal face to take
Some diamond water-drops, and them to treasure
In milky nest, and sip them off at leisure.
But not a moment can he there ensure them,
Nor to such downy rest can he allure them;
For down they rush as though they would be free,
And drop like hours into eternity.
Just like that bird am I in loss of time,
Whene'er I venture on the stream of rhyme;
With shatter'd boat, oar snapt, and canvas rent,
I slowly sail, scarce knowing my intent;

Still scooping up the water with my fingers,
In which a trembling diamond never lingers.

By this, friend Charles, you may full plainly see
Why I have never penn'd a line to thee:
Because my thoughts were never free and clear,
And little fit to please a classic ear;
Because my wine was of too poor a savour
For one whose palate gladdens in the flavour
Of sparkling Helicon:—small good it were
To take him to a desert rude and bare,
Who had on Baiæ's shore reclined at ease,
While Tasso's page was floating in a breeze
That gave soft music from Armida's bowers,
Mingled with fragrance from her rarest flowers:
Small good to one who had by Mulla's stream
Fondled the maidens with the breasts of cream;
Who had beheld Belphebe in a brook,
And lovely Una in a leafy nook,
And Archimago leaning o'er his book:
Who had of all that's sweet tasted, and seen,
From silvery ripple, up to beauty's queen;
From the sequester'd haunts of gay Titania,
To the blue dwelling of divine Urania:
One who of late had ta'en sweet forest walks
With him who elegantly chats and talks—
The wrong'd Libertas—who has told you stories
Of laurel chaplets, and Apollo's glories;
Of troops chivalrous prancing through a city,
And tearful ladies, made for love and pity:
With many else which I have never known.

Thus have I thought; and days on days have flown
Slowly, or rapidly—unwilling still
For you to try my dull, unlearned quill.
Nor should I now, but that I've known you long;
That you first taught me all the sweets of song:
The grand, the sweet, the terse, the free, the fine:
What swell'd with pathos, and what right divine:
Spenserian vowels that elope with ease,
And float along like birds o'er summer seas:
Miltonian storms, and more, Miltonian tenderness,
Michael in arms, and more, meek Eve's fair slenderness.
Who read for me the sonnet swelling loudly
Up to its climax, and then dying proudly?
Who found for me the grandeur of the ode,
Growing, like Atlas, stronger from its load?
Who let me taste that more than cordial dram,
The sharp, the rapier-pointed epigram?
Show'd me that epic was of all the king,
Round, vast, and spanning all, like Saturn's ring?
You too upheld the veil from Clio's beauty,
And pointed out the patriot's stern duty;
The might of Alfred, and the shaft of Tell;
The hand of Brutus, that so grandly fell
Upon a tyrant's head. Ah! had I never seen
Or known your kindness, what might I have been?
What my enjoyments in my youthful years,
Bereft of all that now my life endears?
And can I e'er these benefits forget?
And can I e'er repay the friendly debt?
No, doubly no;—yet should these rhymings please,
I shall roll on the grass with twofold ease;

For I have long time been my fancy feeding
With hopes that you would one day think the reading
Of my rough verses not an hour misspent:
Should it e'er be so, what a rich content!
Some weeks have pass'd since last I saw the spires
In lucent Thames reflected:—warm desires
To see the sun o'erpeep the eastern dimness.
And morning-shadows streaking into slimness
Across the lawny fields, and pebbly water;
To mark the time as they grow broad and shorter;
To feel the air that plays about the hills,
And sips its freshness from the little rills;
To see high, golden corn wave in the light
When Cynthia smiles upon a summer's night,
And peers among the cloudlets, jet and white,
As though she were reclining in a bed
Of bean-blossoms, in heaven freshly shed.
No sooner had I stepp'd into these pleasures,
Than I began to think of rhymes and measures:
The air that floated by me seem'd to say,
“ Write! thou wilt never have a better day.”
And so I did. When many lines I'd written,
Though with their grace I was not oversmitten,
Yet, as my hand was warm, I thought I'd better
Trust to my feelings, and write you a letter.
Such an attempt required an inspiration
Of a peculiar sort,—a consummation;—
Which, had I felt, these scribblings might have been
Verses from which the soul would never wean;
But many days have passed since last my heart
Was warm'd luxuriously by divine Mozart:

By Arne delighted, or by Handel madden'd;
Or by the song of Erin pierced and sadden'd:
What time you were before the music sitting,
And the rich notes to each sensation fitting.
Since I have walk'd with you through shady lanes
That freshly terminate in open plains,
And revell'd in a chat that ceased not,
When, at night-fall, among your books we got:
No, nor when supper came, nor after that,—
Nor when reluctantly I took my hat;
No, nor till cordially you shook my hand
Mid-way between our homes:—your accents bland
Still sounded in my ears, when I no more
Could hear your footsteps touch the gravelly floor.
Sometimes I lost them, and then found again;
You changed the footpath for the grassy plain.
In those still moments I have wish'd you joys
That well you know to honour:—"Life's very toys,
With him," said I, "will take a pleasant charm;
It cannot be that aught will work him harm."
These thoughts now come o'er me with all their might:—
Again I shake your hand,—friend Charles, good-night.

TO MY BROTHERS

SMALL, busy flames play through the fresh-laid coals,
And their faint cracklings o'er our silence creep
Like whispers of the household gods that keep
A gentle empire o'er fraternal souls,

And while, for rhymes, I search around the poles,
 Your eyes are fix'd, as in poetic sleep,
 Upon the lore so voluble and deep,
 That aye at fall of night our care condoles.
 This is your birth-day, Tom, and I rejoice
 That thus it passes smoothly, quietly:
 Many such eves of gently whispering noise
 May we together pass, and calmly try
 What are this world's true joys,—ere the great Voice
 From its fair face shall bid our spirits fly.

“ KEEN FITFUL GUSTS ARE WHISPERING
 HERE AND THERE ”

KEEN fitful gusts are whispering here and there
 Among the bushes, half leafless and dry;
 The stars look very cold about the sky,
 And I have many miles on foot to fare;
 Yet feel I little of the cold bleak air,
 Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily,
 Or of those silver lamps that burn on high,
 Or of the distance from home's pleasant lair:
 For I am brimful of the friendliness
 That in a little cottage I have found;
 Of fair-haired Milton's eloquent distress,
 And all his love for gentle Lycid' drown'd,
 Of lovely Laura in her light green dress,
 And faithful Petrarch gloriously crown'd.

“ TO ONE WHO HAS BEEN LONG
IN CITY PENT ”

To one who has been long in city pent,
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven,—to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.
Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
And gentle tale of love and languishment?
Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel,—an eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,
He mourns that day so soon has glided by,
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S
HOMER

MUCH have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told,
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne:
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene

Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET

THE poetry of earth is never dead:
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead.
That is the grasshopper's—he takes the lead
In summer luxury,—he has never done
With his delights, for when tired out with fun,
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never:
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half-lost,
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

“HAPPY IS ENGLAND”

HAPPY is England! I could be content
To see no other verdure than its own;
To feel no other breezes than are blown
Through its tall woods with high romances blent;
Yet do I sometimes feel a languishment
For skies Italian, and an inward groan
To sit upon an Alp as on a throne,
And half forget what world or worldling meant.
Happy is England, sweet her artless daughters:
Enough their simple loveliness for me,
Enough their whitest arms in silence clinging:
Yet do I often warmly burn to see
Beauties of deeper glance, and hear their singing,
And float with them about the summer waters.

TO A NIGHTINGALE

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thy happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage, that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country-green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-burnt mirth!

O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushing Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs;
Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast-fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldest thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self.
 Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is famed to do, deceiving elf,
 Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
 Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
 In the next valley-glades:
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
 Fled is that music:—do I wake or sleep?

ON A GRECIAN URN

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness!
 Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
 What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,
 In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
 What men or gods are these? What maidens loath?
 What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
 What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
 Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
 Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave

Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
 Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
 Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
 She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
 For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
 Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
 And, happy melodist, unwearied,
 For ever piping songs for ever new;
 More happy love! more happy, happy love!
 For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
 For ever panting and for ever young;
 All breathing human passion far above,
 That leaves a heart high sorrowful and cloy'd,
 A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
 To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
 And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
 What little town by river or sea-shore,
 Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
 Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore
 Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
 With forest branches and the trodden weed;
 Thou, silent form! dost tease us out of thought

As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
 When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

TO PSYCHE

TO HIS BROTHER AND SISTER

"The following poem, the last I have written, is the first and only one with which I have taken even moderate pains; I have, for the most part, dashed off my lines in a hurry; this one I have done leisurely; I think it reads the more richly for it, and it will I hope encourage me to write other things in even a more peaceable and healthy spirit. You must recollect that Psyche was not embodied as a goddess before the time of Apuleius the Platonist, who lived after the Augustan age, and consequently the goddess was never worshipped or sacrificed to with any of the ancient fervour, and perhaps never thought of in the old religion: I am more orthodox than to let a heathen goddess be so neglected."

—Feb., 1819.

O GODDESS! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
 By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
 And pardon that thy secrets should be sung,
 Even into thine own soft-conched ear:
 Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see
 The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes?
 I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,
 And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,

Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side
 In deepest grass, beneath the whispering roof
 Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
 A brooklet, scarce espied:
 'Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers fragrant-eyed,
 Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,
 They lay calm-breathing on the bedded grass;
 Their arms embraced, and their pinions too;
 Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu
 As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,
 And ready still past kisses to outnumber
 At tender eye-dawn of auoreal love:
 The winged boy I knew;
 But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?
 His Psyche true!

O latest-born and loveliest vision far
 Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy!
 Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-region'd star,
 Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky;
 Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,
 Nor altar heap'd with flowers;
 Nor Virgin-choir to make delicious moan
 Upon the midnight hours;
 No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
 From chain-swung censer teeming;
 No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
 Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.
 O brightest! though too late for antique vows,
 Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
 When holy were the haunted forest boughs,

Holy the air, the water, and the fire;
Yet even in these days so far retired
From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,
Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired.
So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
Upon the midnight hours!
Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet
From swunged censer teeming:
Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
In some untrodden region of my mind,
Where branched thoughts, new-grown with pleasant pain,
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind:
Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees
Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep;
And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep;
And in the midst of this wide quietness
A rosy sanctuary will I dress
With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain,
With buds, and bells, and stars without a name.
With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
Who breeding flowers, will never breed the saine:
And there shall be for thee all soft delight
That shadowy thought can win,
A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
To let the warm Love in!

TO FANCY

EVER let the Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home:
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth;
Then let winged Fancy wander
Through the thought still spread beyond her:
Open wide the mind's cage door,
She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar,
O sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Summer's joys are spoilt by use,
And the enjoying of the Spring
Fades as does its blossoming:
Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,
Blushing through the mist and dew
Cloys with tasting: What do then?
Sit thee by the ingle, when
The sear faggot blazes bright,
Spirit of a winter's night;
When the soundless earth is muffled,
And the caked snow is shuffled
From the ploughboy's heavy shoon;
When the Night doth meet the Noon
In a dark conspiracy
To banish Even from her sky.
Sit thee there, and send abroad,
With a mind self-overawed,
Fancy, high-commission'd:—send her;
She has vassals to attend her:

She will bring, in spite of frost,
Beauties that the earth hath lost;
She will bring thee, all together,
All delights of summer weather;
All the buds and bells of May,
From dewy sward or thorny spray;
All the heaped Autumn's wealth,
With a still, mysterious stealth
She will mix these pleasures up
Like three fit wines in a cup,
And thou shalt quaff it:—thou shalt hear
Distant harvest-carols clear;
Rustle of the reaped corn;
Sweet birds antheming the morn:
And, in the same moment—hark!
'Tis the early April lark,
Or the rooks, with busy caw,
Foraging for sticks and straw.
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
The daisy and the marigold;
White-plumed lilies, and the first
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst;
Shaded hyacinth, alway
Sapphire queen of the mid-May;
And every leaf, and every flower
Pearled with the self-same shower.
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep
Meagre from its celled sleep;
And the snake all winter-thin
Cast on sunny bank its skin!
Freckled nest eggs thou shalt see

Hatching in the hawthorn tree,
When the hen-bird's wing doth rest
Quiet on her mossy nest;
Then the hurry and alarm
When the bee-hive casts its swarm;
Acorns ripe down-pattering
While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Everything is spoilt by use:
Where's the cheek that doth not fade,
Too much gazed at? Where's the maid
Whose lip mature is ever new?
Where's the eye, however blue,
Doth not weary? Where's the face
One would meet in every place?
Where's the voice, however soft,
One would hear so very oft?
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
Let, then, winged Fancy find
Thee a mistress to thy mind:
Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter,
Ere the God of Torment taught her
How to frown and how to chide;
With a waist and with a side
White as Hebe's, when her zone
Slipt its golden clasp, and down
Fell her kirtle to her feet,
While she held the goblet sweet,
And Jove grew languid.—Break the mesh

Of the Fancy's silken leash ;
Quickly break her prison-string,
And such joys as these she'll bring.—
Let the winged Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home.

TO THE POETS

BARDS of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth !
Have ye souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new ?
Yes, and those of heaven commune
With the spheres of sun and moon ;
With the noise of fountains wondrous,
And the parle of voices thund'rous ;
With the whisper of heaven's trees
And one another, in soft ease
Seated on Elysian lawns
Browsed by none but Dian's fawns ;
Underneath large blue-bells tented,
Where the daisies are rose-scented,
And the rose herself has got
Perfume which on earth is not ;
Where the nightingale doth sing
Not a senseless, tranced thing,
But divine, melodious truth,
Philosophic numbers smooth ;
Tales and golden histories
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
On the earth ye live again;
And the souls ye left behind you
Teach us, here, the way to find you,
Where your other souls are joying,
Never slumber'd, never cloying.
Here, you earth-born souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week;
Of their sorrows and delights;
Of their passions and their spites;
Of their glory and their shame;
What does strengthen, and what maim.
Thus ye teach us, every day,
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Ye have souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new!

LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN

SOULS of poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?
Have ye tipped drink more fine
Than mine host's Canary wine?
Or are fruits of Paradise
Sweeter than those dainty pies

Of venison? O generous food!
Drest as though bold Robin Hood
Would, with his Maid Marian,
Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day
Mine host's sign-board flew away,
Nobody knew whither, till
An Astrologer's old quill
To a sheepskin gave the story,—
Said he saw you in your glory,
Underneath a new old-sign
Sipping beverage divine,
And pledging with contented smack
The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

ROBIN HOOD

TO A FRIEND

No! those days are gone away,
And their hours are old and gray,
And their minutes buried all
Under the down-trodden pall

Of the leaves of many years:
Many times have Winter's shears,
Frozen North, and Chilling East,
Sounded tempests to the feast
Of the forest's whispering fleeces,
Since men knew nor rent nor leases.

No, the bugle sounds no more,
And the twanging bow no more;
Silent is the ivory shrill
Past the heath and up the hill;
There is no mid-forest laugh,
Where lone Echo gives the half
To some wight, amazed to hear
Jesting, deep in forest drear.

On the fairest time of June
You may go, with sun or moon,
Or the seven stars to light you,
Or the polar ray to right you;
But you never may behold
Little John, or Robin bold:
Never one, of all the clan,
Thrumming on an empty can
Some old hunting ditty, while
He doth his green way beguile
To fair hostess Merriment,
Down beside the pasture Trent;
For he left the merry tale,
Messenger for spicy ale.

Gone, the merry morris din;
Gone, the song of Gamelyn;
Gone, the tough-belted outlaw
Idling in the "grené shawe";
All are gone away and past!
And if Robin should be cast
Sudden from his tufted grave,
And if Marian should have
Once again her forest days,
She would weep, and he would craze;
He would swear, for all his oaks,
Fall'n beneath the dock-yard strokes,
Have rotted on the briny seas;
She would weep that her wild bees
Sang not to her—strange! that honey
Can't be got without hard money!

So it is; yet let us sing
Honour to the old bow-string!
Honour to the bugle-horn!
Honour to the woods unshorn!
Honour to the Lincoln green!
Honour to the archer keen!
Honour to tight Little John,
And the horse he rode upon!
Honour to bold Robin Hood,
Sleeping in the underwood:
Honour to Maid Marian,
And to all the Sherwood clan!
Though their days have hurried by
Let us two a burden try.

TO AUTUMN

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness!

Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless

With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,

And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;

To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells

With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,

For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?

Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,

Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,

Drowsed with the fumes of poppies, while thy hook

Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;
And sometime like a gleaner thou dost keep

Steady thy laden head across a brook;

Or by a cider-press, with patient look,

Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?

Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,

And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;

Then in a wailful choir, the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

ON MELANCHOLY

No, no! go not to Lethe, neither twist
Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
Nor let the beetle nor the death-moth be
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
Or on the wealth of globed peonies;

Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with beauty—Beauty that must die;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:
Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous
tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine:
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

ON SEEING THE ELGIN MARBLES FOR THE FIRST TIME

My spirit is too weak; mortality
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
And each imagined pinnacle and steep
Of godlike hardship tells me I must die
Like a sick eagle looking at the sky.
Yet 'tis a gentle luxury to weep,
That I have not the cloudy winds to keep
Fresh for the opening of the morning's eye.
Such dim-conceived glories of the brain
Bring round the heart an indescribable feud;

So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,
 That mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude
 Wasting of old Time—with a billowy main,
 A sun, a shadow of a magnitude.

ON THE SEA

It keeps eternal whisperings around
 Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
 Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the spell
 Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
 Often 'tis in such gentle temper found,
 That scarcely will the very smallest shell
 Be moved for days from whence it sometime fell,
 When last the winds of heaven were unbound.
 Oh ye! who have your eye-balls vex'd and tired,
 Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea;
 Oh ye! whose ears are dinn'd with uproar rude,
 Or fed too much with cloying melody,—
 Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth, and brood
 Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired!

WRITTEN BEFORE RE-READING
“ KING LEAR ”

O GOLDEN-TONGUED Romance with serene lute!
 Fair plumed Syren! Queen! if far away!
 Leave melodizing on this wintry day,
 Shut up thine olden volume, and be mute.

Adieu! for once again the fierce dispute,
Betwixt Hell torment and impassion'd clay
Must I burn through; once more assay
The bitter sweet of this Shakespearian fruit.
Chief Poet! and ye clouds of Albion,
Begetters of our deep eternal theme,
When I am through the old oak forest gone,
Let me not wander in a barren dream,
But when I am consumed with the Fire,
Give me new Phœnix-wings to fly at my desire.

“ WHEN I HAVE FEARS ”

WHEN I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
Before high-piled books, in charact'ry,
Hold like full garners the full-ripen'd grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And feel that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour!
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love!—then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think,
Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

THE HUMAN SEASONS

FOUR Seasons fill the measure of the year;
There are four seasons in the mind of man:
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear
Takes in all beauty with an easy span:
He has his Summer, when luxuriously
Spring's honey'd cud of youthful thought he loves
To ruminate, and by such dreaming high
Is nearest unto Heaven: quiet coves
His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings
He furleth close; contented so to look
On mists in idleness—to let fair things
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.
He has his Winter too of pale misfeature,
Or else he would forego his mortal nature.

FAERY SONG

SHED no tear! oh shed no tear!
The flower will bloom another year.
Weep no more! oh weep no more!
Young buds sleep in the root's white core.
Dry your eyes! oh dry your eyes!
For I was taught in Paradise
To ease my breast of melodies—
Shed no tear.

Overhead! look overhead!
'Mong the blossoms white and red—
Look up, look up. I flutter now
On this flush pomegranate bough.
See me! 'tis this silvery bill
Ever cures the good man's ill.
Shed no tear! oh shed no tear!
The flower will bloom another year.
Adieu, adieu!—I fly, adieu!
I vanish in the heaven's blue—
 Adieu! Adieu!

TO HOMER

STANDING aloof in giant ignorance,
Of thee I hear and of the Cyclades,
As one who sits ashore and longs perchance
To visit dolphin-coral in deep seas.
So thou wast blind!—but then the veil was rent;
For Jove uncurtain'd Heaven to let thee live,
And Neptune made for thee a spermy tent,
And Pan made sing for thee his forest-hive;
Ay, on shores of darkness there is light,
And precipices show untrodden green;
There is a budding morrow in midnight;
There is a triple sight in blindness keen;
Such seeing hadst thou, as it once befell
To Dian, Queen of Earth, and Heaven, and Hell.

MEG MERRILIES

OLD MEG she was a gipsy,
And lived upon the moors:
Her bed it was the brown heath turf,
And her house was out of doors.
Her apples were swart blackberries,
Her currants, pods o' broom;
Her wine was dew of the wild white rose,
Her book a church-yard tomb.

Her brothers were the craggy hills,
Her sisters larchen trees;
Alone with her great family
She lived as she did please.
No breakfast had she many a morn,
No dinner many a noon,
And, 'stead of supper, she would stare
Full hard against the moon.

But every morn, of woodbine fresh
She made her garlanding,
And, every night, the dark glen yew
She wove, and she would sing.
And with her fingers, old and brown,
She plaited mats of rushes,
And gave them to the cottagers
She met among the bushes.

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen,
 And tall as Amazon;
 An old red blanket cloak she wore,
 A ship-hat had she on:
 God rest her aged bones somewhere!
 She died full long agone!

SONNET ON AILSA ROCK

HEARKEN, thou craggy ocean-pyramid,
 Give answer by thy voice—the sea-fowl's screams!
 When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams?
 When from the sun was thy broad forehead hid?
 How long is't since the mighty Power bid
 Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams—
 Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams—
 Or when grey clouds are thy cold coverlid!
 Thou answer'st not; for thou art dead asleep.
 Thy life is but two dead eternities,
 The last in air, the former in the deep!
 First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies
 Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made thee steep,
 Another cannot wake thy giant-size!

THE DOVE

I HAD a dove, and the sweet dove died;
 And I have thought it died of grieving;
 O, what could it grieve for? its feet were tied
 With a single thread of my own hand's weaving;

Sweet little red feet, why should you die?
Why should you leave me, sweet bird, why?
You lived alone in the forest tree,
Why, pretty thing! would you not live with me?
I kissed you oft and gave you white peas;
Why not live sweetly, as in the green trees?

ON INDOLENCE

They toil not, neither do they spin.

ONE morn before me were three figures seen,
With bowed necks, and joined hands, side-faced;
And one behind the other stepp'd serene,
In placid sandals, and in white robes graced;
They pass'd, like figures on a marble urn,
When shifted round to see the other side;
They came again; as when the urn once more
Is shifted round, the first green shades return;
And they were strange to me, as may betide
With vases, to one deep in Phidian lore.

How is it, Shadows! that I knew ye not?
How came ye muffled in so hush a mask?
Was it a silent deep-disguised plot
To steal away, and leave without a task
My idle days? Ripe was the drowsy hour;
The blissful cloud of summer-indolence

Benumb'd my eyes; my pulse grew less and less;
Pain had no sting, and pleasure's wreath no flower;
O, why did ye not melt, and leave my sense
Unhaunted quite of all but—nothingness?

A third time pass'd they by, and, passing, turn'd
Each one the face a moment whiles to me;
Then faded, and to follow them I burn'd
And ached for wings, because I knew the three;
The first was a fair Maid, and Love her name;
The second was Ambition, pale of cheek,
And ever watchful with fatigued eye;
The last, whom I love more, the more of blame
Is heap'd upon her, maiden most unmeek,
I knew to be my demon Poesy.

They faded, and, forsooth! I wanted wings:
O folly! What is Love? and where is it?
And for that poor Ambition! it springs
From a man's little heart's short fever-fit;
For Poesy!—no,—she has not a joy,—
At least for me,—so sweet as drowsy noons,
And evenings steep'd in honey'd indolence;
O, for an age so shelter'd from annoy,
That I may never know how change the moons,
Or hear the voice of busy common-sense!

And once more came they by;—alas! wherefore?
My sleep had been embroider'd with dim dreams;
My soul had been a lawn besprinkled o'er
With flowers, and stirring shades, and baffled beams;

The morn was clouded, but no shower fell,
 Tho' in her lids hung the sweet tears of May;
 The open casement press'd a new-leaved vine,
 Let in the budding warmth and throstle's lay;
 O Shadows! 'twas a time to bid farewell!
 Upon your skirts had fallen no tears of mine.

So, ye three Ghosts, adieu! Ye cannot raise
 My head cool-bedded in the flowery grass;
 For I would not be dieted with praise,
 A pet-lamb in a sentimental farce!
 Fade softly from my eyes, and be once more
 In masque-like figures on the dreamy urn;
 Farewell! I yet have visions for the night,
 And for the day faint visions there is store;
 Vanish, ye Phantoms! from my idle spright,
 Into the clouds, and never more return!

BALLAD

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
 Alone and palely loitering?
 The sedge has wither'd from the lake,
 And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
 So haggard and so woebegone?
 The squirrel's granary is full,
 And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone,
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
“ I love thee true! ”

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sigh'd full sore,
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four.

And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dream'd—ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill's side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
 Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
 They cried—" La Belle Dame sans Merci
 Hath thee in thrall!"

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
 With horrid warning gaped wide,
 And I awoke and found me here,
 On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn here,
 Alone and palely loitering,
 Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
 And no birds sing.

ON FAME

FAME, like a wayward girl, will still be coy
 To those who woo her with too slavish knees,
 But makes surrender to some thoughtless boy,
 And dotes the more upon a heart at ease;
 She is a Gipsy,—will not speak to those
 Who have not learnt to be content without her;
 A Jilt, whose ear was never whisper'd close,
 Who thinks they scandal her who talk about her;
 A very Gipsy is she, Nilus-born,
 Sister-in-law to jealous Potiphar;
 Ye love-sick Bards! repay her scorn for scorn;
 Ye Artists lovelorn! madmen that ye are!
 Make your best bow to her and bid adieu,
 Then, if she likes it, she will follow you.

ON FAME

You cannot eat your cake and have it too.—*Proverb.*

How fever'd is the man, who cannot look
Upon his mortal days with temperate blood,
Who vexes all the leaves of his life's book,
And robs his fair name of its maidenhood;
It is as if the rose should pluck herself,
Or the ripe plum finger its misty bloom,
As if a Naiad, like a meddling elf,
Should darken her pure grot with muddy gloom;
But the rose leaves herself upon the briar,
For winds to kiss and grateful bees to feed,
And the ripe plum still wears its dim attire;
The undisturbed lake has crystal space;
Why then should man, teasing the world for grace,
Spoil his salvation for a fierce miscreed?

TO FANNY

I CRY your mercy—pity—love!—ay, love!
Merciful love that tantalises not,
One-thoughted, never-wandering, guileless love,
Unmask'd, and being seen—without a blot!
O! let me have thee whole,—all—all—be mine!
That shape, that fairness, that sweet minor zest
Of love, your kiss,—those hands, those eyes divine,
That warm, white, lucent, million-pleasured breast,—

Youself—your soul—in pity give me all,
Withhold no atom's atom or I die,
Or living on, perhaps, your wretched thrall,
Forget, in the midst of idle misery,
Life's purposes,—the palate of my mind
Losing its gust, and my ambition blind!

STANZAS FROM "THE EVE OF ST. AGNES"

ST. AGNES' EVE—ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptured dead on each side seem to freeze,
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by, and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache' in icy hoods and mails.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor.
But no—already had his death-bell rung;
The joys of all his life were said and sung;
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve:
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinner's sake to grieve.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put crosswise on their
breasts.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting fairly
The brain new-stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retired; not cool'd by high disdain,
But she saw not: her heart was elsewhere;
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:
The hallow'd hour was near at hand, she sighs:
Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
Of whisperers in anger or in sport;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwink'd with faery fancy; all amort,
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

LINES FROM "LAMIA"

PART I

UPON a time, before the faery broods
Drove Nymph and Satyr from the prosperous woods,
Before King Oberon's bright diadem,
Sceptre, and mantle, clasp'd with dewy gem,
Frighted away the Dryads and the Fauns
From rushes green, and brakes, and cowslipp'd lawns,
The ever-smitten Hermes empty left
His golden throne, bent warm on amorous theft:
From high Olympus had he stolen light,
On this side of Jove's clouds, to escape the sight
Of his great summoner, and made retreat
Into a forest on the shores of Crete.
For somewhere in that sacred island dwelt
A nymph to whom all hoofed Satyrs knelt;
At whose white feet the languid Tritons pour'd
Pearls, while on land they wither'd and adored.
Fast by the springs where she to bathe was wont,
And in those meads where sometimes she might haunt,
Were strewn rich gifts, unknown to any Muse,
Though Fancy's casket were unlock'd to choose.
Ah, what a world of love was at her feet!
So Hermes thought, and a celestial heat
Burn'd from his winged heels to either ear,
That, from a whiteness as the lily clear,
Blush'd into roses 'mid his golden hair,
Fallen in jealous curls about his shoulders bare.

From vale to vale, from wood to wood, he flew,
Breathing upon the flowers his passion new,
And wound with many a river to its head,
To find where this sweet nymph prepared her secret bed.
In vain; the sweet nymph might nowhere be found,
And so he rested on the lonely ground,
Pensive, and full of painful jealousies
Of the Wood-Gods, and even the very trees.
There as he stood he heard a mournful voice,
Such as, once heard, in gentle heart destroys
All pain but pity; thus the lone voice spake:
" When from this wreathed tomb shall I awake?
When move in a sweet body fit for life,
And love, and pleasure, and the ruddy strife
Of hearts and lips? Ah, miserable me! "
The God, dove-footed, glided silently
Round bush and tree, soft-brushing in his speed
The taller grasses and full-flowering weed,
Until he found a palpitating snake,
Bright and cirque-couchant, in a dusky brake.

She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,
Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue;
Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson-barr'd;
And full of silver moons, that, as she breathed,
Dissolved, or brighter shone, or interwreathed
Their lustres with the gloomier tapestries—
So rainbow-sided, touch'd with miseries,
She seem'd at once, some penanced lady elf,
Some demon's mistress, or the demon's self.

Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire
Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar:
Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet!
She had a woman's mouth with all its pearls complete;
And for her eyes—what could such eyes do there
But weep and weep, that they were born so fair,
As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian air?
Her throat was serpent, but the words she spake
Came, as through bubbling honey, for Love's sake,
And thus; while Hermes on his pinions lay,
Like a stoop'd falcon ere he takes his prey:

“ Fair Hermes! crown'd with feathers, fluttering light,
I had a splendid dream of thee last night!
I saw thee sitting, on a throne of gold,
Among the Gods, upon Olympus old,
The only sad one; for thou didst not hear
The soft lute-finger'd Muses chanting clear,
Nor even Apollo when he sang alone,
Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long melodious moan.
I dreamt I saw thee, robed in purple flakes,
Break amorous through the clouds, as morning breaks,
And swiftly as a bright Phœbean dart
Strike for the Cretan isle; and here thou art!
Too gentle Hermes, hast thou found the maid? ”
Whereat the star of Lethe not delay'd
His rosy eloquence, and thus inquired:
“ Thou smooth-lipp'd serpent, surely high-inspired!
Thou beauteous wreath, with melancholy eyes,
Possess whatever bliss thou canst devise,
Telling me only where my nymph is fled—

Where she doth breathe!" " Bright planet, thou hast said,"

Return'd the snake, "but seal with oaths, fair God!"

" I swear," said Hermes, " by my serpent rod,
And by thine eyes, and by thy starry crown!"

Light flew his earnest words, among the blossoms blown.
Then thus again the brilliance feminine:

" Too frail of heart! for this lost nymph of thine,
Free as the air, invisibly she strays

About these thornless wilds; her pleasant days
She tastes unseen; unseen her nimble feet

Leave traces in the grass and flowers sweet:

From weary tendrils and bow'd branches green
She plucks the fruit unseen, she bathes unseen:

And by my power is her beauty veil'd

To keep it unaffronted, unassail'd

By the love-glances of unlovely eyes

Of Satyrs, Fauns, and blear'd Silenus' sighs.

Pale grew her immortality, for woe

Of all these lovers, and she grieved so

I took compassion on her, bade her steep

Her hair in weird syrups, that would keep

Her loveliness invisible, yet free

To wander as she loves, in liberty.

Thou shalt behold her, Hermes, thou alone,

If thou wilt, as thou swearest, grant my boon."

Then, once again, the charmed God began

An oath, and through the serpent's ears it ran

Warm, tremulous, devout, psalterian.

Ravish'd she lifted her Circean head,

Blush'd a live damask, and swift-lisping said,

" I was a woman, let me have once more
A woman's shape, and charming as before.
I love a youth of Corinth—O the bliss!
Give me my woman's form, and place me where he is.
Stoop, Hermes, let me breathe upon thy brow,
And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even now."
The God on half-shut feathers sank serene,
She breathed upon his eyes, and swift was seen
Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling on the green.
It was no dream; or say a dream it was,
Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly pass
Their pleasures in a long immortal dream.
One warm, flush'd moment, hovering, it might seem,
Dash'd by the wood-nymph's beauty, so he burn'd;
Then, lighting on the printless verdure, turn'd
To the swoon'd serpent, and with languid arm,
Delicate, put to proof the lithe Caducean charm.
So done, upon the nymph his eyes he bent
Full of adoring tears and blandishment,
And towards her stept: she, like a moon in wane,
Faded before him, cower'd, nor could restrain
Her fearful sobs, self-folding like a flower
That faints into itself at evening hour:
But the God fostering her chilled hand,
She felt the warmth, her eyelids open'd bland,
And, like new flowers at morning song of bees,
Bloom'd, and gave up her honey to the lees.
Into the green-recessed woods they flew;
Nor grew they pale, as mortal lovers do.

STANZAS FROM
“ISABELLA, OR THE POT OF BASIL”

A STORY, FROM BOCCACCIO

FAIR Isabel, poor simple Isabel!

Lorenzo, a young palmer in Love's eye!
They could not in the self-same mansion dwell

Without some stir of heart, some malady;
They could not sit at meals but feel how well

It soothed each to be the other by;
They could not, sure, beneath the same roof sleep,
But to each other dream, and nightly weep.

With every morn their love grew tenderer,

With every eve deeper and tenderer still;
He might not in house, field, or garden stir,

But her full shape would all his seeing fill;
And his continual voice was pleasanter

To her, than noise of trees or hidden rill;
Her lute-string gave an echo of his name,
She spoilt her half-done broidery with the same.

He knew whose gentle hand was at the latch,

Before the door had given her to his eyes;
And from her chamber-window he would catch

Her beauty farther than the falcon spies;
And constant as her vespers would he watch,

Because her face was turn'd to the same skies;
And with sick longing all the night outwear,
To hear her morning-step upon the stair.

A whole long month of May in this sad plight
 Made their cheeks paler by the break of June:
 "To-morrow will I bow to my delight,
 To-morrow will I ask my lady's boon."—
 "O may I never see another night,
 Lorenzo, if thy lips breathe not love's tune."—
 So spake they to their pillows; but, alas,
 Honeyless days and days did he let pass;

Until sweet Isabella's untouched cheek
 Fell sick within the rose's just domain,
 Fell thin as a young mother's, who doth seek
 By every lull to cool her infant's pain:
 "How ill she is!" said he, "I may not speak
 And yet I will, and tell my love all plain:
 If looks speak love-laws, I will drink her tears,
 And at the least 'twill startle off her cares."

So said he one fair morning, and all day
 His heart beat awfully against his side;
 And to his heart he inwardly did pray
 For power to speak; but still the ruddy tide
 Stifled his voice, and pulsed resolve away—
 Fever'd his high conceit of such a bride,
 Yet brought him to the meekness of a child:
 Alas! when passion is both meek and wild!

So once more he had waked and anguished
 A dreary night of love and misery,
 If Isabel's quick eye had not been wed
 To every symbol on his forehead high;

She saw it waxing very pale and dead,
And straight all flush'd; so, lisped tenderly,
"Lorenzo!"—here she ceased her timid quest,
But in her tone and look he read the rest.

"O Isabella! I can half perceive
That I may speak my grief into thine ear;
If thou didst ever anything believe,
Believe how I love thee, believe how near
My soul is to its doom: I would not grieve
Thy hand by unwelcome pressing, would not fear
Thine eyes by gazing; but I cannot live
Another night, and not my passion shrive.

"Love: thou art leading me from wintry cold,
Lady! thou leadest me to summer clime,
And I must taste the blossoms that unfold
In its ripe warmth this gracious morning time."
So said, his erewhile timid lips grew bold,
And poesied with hers in dewy rhyme:
Great bliss was with them, and great happiness
Grew, like a lusty flower in June's caress.

Parting they seem'd to tread upon the air,
Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart
Only to meet again more close, and share
The inward fragrance of each other's heart.
She, to her chamber gone, a ditty fair
Sang, of delicious love and honey'd dart;
He with light steps went up a western hill,
And bade the sun farewell, and joy'd his fill.

LINES FROM "ENDYMION"

This poem tells of the love of the shepherd prince Endymion for the moon-goddess Selene.

A THING of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darken'd ways
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences
For one short hour; no, even as the trees
That whisper round a temple become soon
Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,
The passion poesy, glories infinite,
Haunt us till they become a cheering light
Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,
That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'ercast,
They alway must be with us, or we die.
Therefore, 'tis with full happiness that I
Will trace the story of Endymion.
The very music of the name has gone
Into my being, and each pleasant scene
Is growing fresh before me as the green
Of our own valleys: so I will begin
Now while I cannot hear the city's din;
Now while the early budders are just new,
And run in mazes of the youngest hue
About old forests; while the willow trails
Its delicate amber; and the dairy pails
Bring home increase of milk. And, as the year
Grows lush in juicy stalks, I'll smoothly steer
My little boat, for many quiet hours,
With streams that deepen freshly into bowers.
Many and many a verse I hope to write,
Before the daisies, vermeil rimm'd and white,
Hide in deep herbage; and ere yet the bees
Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas,
I must be near the middle of my story.
O may no wintry season, bare and hoary,
See it half-finish'd: but let Autumn bold,

With universal tinge of sober gold,
Be all about me when I make an end.
And now at once, adventuresome, I send
My herald thought into a wilderness:
There let its trumpet blow, and quickly dress
My uncertain path with green, that I may speed
Easily onward, thorough flowers and weed.

O magic sleep! O comfortable bird,
That broodest o'er the troubled sea of the mind
Till it is hush'd and smooth! O unconfined
Restraint! imprison'd liberty! great key
To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,
Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled caves,
Echoing grottoes, full of tumbling waves
And moonlight; ay, to all the mazy world
Of silvery enchantment!—who, upfurl'd
Beneath thy drowsy wing a triple hour,
But renovates and lives?

Brain-sick shepherd prince!
What promise hast thou faithful guarded since
The day of sacrifice? Or, have new sorrows
Come with the constant dawn upon thy morrows?
Alas! 'tis his old grief. For many days
Has he been wandering in uncertain ways:
Through wilderness, and woods of mossed oaks;
Counting his woe-worn minutes, by the strokes
Of the lone wood-cutter; and listening still,
Hour after hour, to each lush-leaved rill.

Now he is sitting by a shady spring,
And elbow-deep with feverous fingering
Stems the upbursting cold: a wild rose-tree
Pavilions him in bloom, and he doth see
A bud which snares his fancy: lo! but now
He plucks it, dips its stalk in the water: how!
It swells, it buds, it flowers beneath his sight;
And, in the middle, there is softly pight
A golden butterfly; upon whose wings
There must be surely character'd strange things,
For with wide eye he wonders, and smiles oft.

Lightly this little herald flew aloft,
Follow'd by glad Endymion's clasped hands:
Onward it flies. From languor's sullen bands
His limbs are loosed, and eager, on he hies
Dazzled to trace it in the sunny skies.
It seem'd he flew, the way so easy was;
And like a new-born spirit did he pass
Through the green evening quiet in the sun
O'er many a heath, through many a woodland dun,
Through buried paths, where sleepy twilight dreams
The summer time away. One track unseams
A wooded cleft, and, far away, the blue
Of ocean fades upon him; then, anew,
He sinks adown a solitary glen,
Where there was never sound of mortal men,
Saving, perhaps, some snow-light cadences
Melting to silence, when upon the breeze
Some holy bark let forth an anthem sweet,
To cheer itself to Delphi. Still his feet

Went swift beneath the merry-winged guide,
Until it reach'd a splashing fountain's side
That, near a cavern's mouth, for ever pour'd
Unto the temperate air; then high it soared,
And, downward, suddenly began to dip,
As if, athirst with so much toil, 'twould sip
The crystal spout-head: so it did, with touch
Most delicate, as though afraid to smutch
Even with mealy gold the waters clear.

But, at that very touch, to disappear
So fairy-quick, was strange! Bewildered,
Endymion sought around, and shook each bed
Of covert flowers in vain; and then he flung
Himself along the grass. What gentle tongue,
What whisperer disturb'd his gloomy rest?

It was a nymph uprisen to the breast
In the fountain's pebbly margin, and she stood
'Mong lilies, like the youngest of the brood.
To him her dripping hand she softly kist,
And anxiously began to plait and twist
Her ringlets round her fingers, saying: "Youth!
Too long, alas, hast thou starved on the ruth,
The bitterness of love: too long indeed,
Seeing thou art so gentle. Could I weed
Thy soul of care, by heavens, I would offer
All the bright riches of my crystal coffer
To Amphitrite; all my clear-eyed fish,
Golden, or rainbow-sided, or purplish,
Vermilion-tail'd, or finn'd with silvery gauze;
Yea, or my veined pebble-floor, that draws
A virgin-light to the deep; my grotto-sands,

Tawny and gold, oozed slowly from far lands
By my diligent springs: my level lilies, shells,
My charming-rod, my potent river spells;
Yes, everything, even to the pearly cup
Meander gave me,—for I bubbled up
To fainting creatures in a desert wild.
But woe is me, I am but as a child
To gladden thee; and all I dare to say,
Is, that I pity thee; that on this day
I've been thy guide; that thou must wander far
In other regions, past the scanty bar
To mortal steps, before thou canst be ta'en
From every wasting sigh, from every pain,
Into the gentle bosom of thy love.
Why it is thus, one knows in heaven above:
But, a poor Naiad, I guess not. Farewell!
I have a ditty for my hollow cell."

Hereat she vanish'd from Endymion's gaze,
Who brooded o'er the water in amaze:
The dashing fount pour'd on, and where its pool
Lay, half asleep, in grass and rushes cool,
Quick waterflies and gnats were sporting still,
And fish were dimpling, as if good nor ill
Had fallen out that hour. The wanderer,
Holding his forehead, to keep off the burr
Of smothering fancies, patiently sat down;
And, while beneath the evening's sleepy frown
Glow-worms began to trim their starry lamps,
Thus breathed he to himself: " Whoso encamps
To take a fancied city of delight,

O what a wretch is he! and when 'tis his,
After long toil and travelling, to miss
The kernel of his hopes, how more than vile!
Yet, for him there's refreshment even in toil:
Another city doth he set about,
Free from the smallest pebble-bead of doubt
That he will seize on trickling honey-combs:
Alas! he finds them dry; and then he foams,
And onward to another city speeds.
But this is human life: the war, the deeds,
The disappointment, the anxiety,
Imagination's struggles, far and nigh,
All human; bearing in themselves this good,
That they are still the air, the subtle food,
To make us feel existence, and to show
How quiet death is. Where soil is men grow,
Whether to weeds or flowers; but for me,
There is no depth to strike in: I can see
Nought earthly worth my compassing; so stand
Upon a misty, jutting head of land—
Alone? No, no; and by the Orphean lute,
When mad Eurydice is listening to't,
I'd rather stand upon this misty peak,
With not a thing to sigh for, or to seek,
But the soft shadow of my thrice-seen love,
Than be—I care not what. O meekest dove
Of heaven! O Cynthia, ten-times bright and fair!
From thy blue throne, now filling all the air,
Glance but one little beam of temper'd light
Into my bosom, that the dreadful night
And tyranny of love be somewhat scared!

Yet do not so, sweet queen; one torment spared
Would give a pang to jealous misery,
Worse than the torment's self: but rather tie
Large wings upon my shoulders, and point out
My love's far dwelling. Though the playful rout
Of Cupids shun thee, too divine art thou,
Too keen in beauty, for thy silver prow
Not to have dipp'd in love's most gentle stream.
O be propitious, nor severely deem
My madness impious; for, by all the stars
That tend thy bidding, I do think the bars
That kept my spirit in are burst—that I
Am sailing with thee through the dizzy sky!
How beautiful thou art! The world how deep!
How tremulous-dazzlingly the wheels sweep
Around their axle! Then these gleaming reins,
How lithe! When this thy chariot attains
Its airy goal, haply some bower veils
Those twilight eyes? Those eyes!—my spirit fails;
Dear goddess, help! or the wide-gaping air
Will gulf me—help!"—At this, with madden'd stare,
And lifted hands, and trembling lips, he stood;
Like old Deucalion mountain'd o'er the flood,
Or blind Orion hungry for the morn.
And, but from the deep cavern there was borne
A voice, he had been froze to senseless stone;
Nor sigh of his, nor plaint, nor passion'd moan
Had more been heard. Thus swell'd it forth: "Descend,
Young mountaineer! descend where alleys bend
Into the sparry hollows of the world!
Oft hast thou seen bolts of the thunder hurl'd

As from thy threshold; day by day hast been
A little lower than the chilly sheen
Of icy pinnacles, and dipp'dst thine arms
Into the deadening ether that still charms
Their marble being: now, as deep profound
As those are high, descend! He ne'er is crown'd
With immortality, who fears to follow
Where airy voices lead: so through the hollow,
The silent mysteries of earth, descend!"

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After a thousand mazes overgone,
At last, with sudden step, he came upon
A chamber, myrtle-wall'd, embower'd high,
Full of light, incense, tender minstrelsy,
And more of beautiful and strange beside:
For on a silken couch of rosy pride,
In midst of all, there lay a sleeping youth
Of fondest beauty; fonder, in fair sooth,
Than sighs could fathom, or contentment reach:
And coverlids gold-tinted like the peach,
Or ripe October's faded marigolds,
Fell sleek about him in a thousand folds—
Not hiding up an Apollonian curve
Of neck and shoulder, nor the tenting swerve
Of knee from knee, nor ankles pointing light;
But rather, giving them to the fill'd sight
Officially. Sideway his face repos'd
On one white arm, and tenderly unclos'd,
By tenderest pressure, a faint damask mouth
To slumbery pout: just as the morning south

Disparts a dew-lipp'd rose. Above his head,
Four lily stalks did their white honours wed
To make a coronal; and round him grew
All tendrils green, of every bloom and hue,
Together intertwined and trammell'd fresh:
The vine of glossy sprout; the ivy mesh,
Shading its Ethiop berries; and woodbine,
Of velvet leaves and bugle-blooms divine;
Convolvulus in streaked vases flush;
The creeper, mellowing for an autumn blush;
And virgin's bower, trailing airily;
With others of the sisterhood. Hard by,
Stood serene Cupids watching silently.
One, kneeling to a lyre, touch'd the strings,
Muffling to death the pathos with his wings;
And, ever and anon, uprose to look
At the youth's slumber; while another took
A willow bough, distilling odorous dew,
And shook it on his hair; another flew
In through the woven roof, and fluttering-wise
Rain'd violets upon his sleeping eyes.

OPENING LINES OF "HYPERION"

DEEP in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat grey-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair;

Forest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
By reason of his fallen divinity,
Spreading a shade: the Naiad 'mid her reeds
Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went,
No farther than to where his feet had stray'd,
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unsceptred; and his realmless eyes were closed;
While his bow'd head seem'd list'ning to the Earth,
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place;
But there came one, who with a kindred hand
Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.
She was a Goddess of the infant world;
By her in stature the tall Amazon
Had stood a pigmy's height: she would have ta'en
Achilles by the hair and bent his neck;
Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel.
Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,
Pedestal'd haply in a palace-court,
When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore.
But oh! how unlike marble was that face:

How beautiful, if sorrow had not made
Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.
There was a listening fear in her regard,
As if calamity had but begun;
As if the vanward clouds of evil days
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
Was with its stored thunder labouring up.
One hand she press'd upon that aching spot
Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain:
The other upon Saturn's bended neck
She laid, and to the level of his ear
Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake
In solemn tenour and deep organ tone:
Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
Would come in these like accents; O how frail
To that large utterance of the early Gods!
“Saturn, look up!—though wherefore, poor old King?
I have no comfort for thee, no not one:
I cannot say, ‘O wherefore sleepest thou?’
For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth
Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God;
And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
Has from thy sceptre pass'd; and all the air
Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.
Thy thunder, conscious of the new command,
Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;
And thy sharp lightning in unpractised hands
Scorches and burns our once serene domain.
O aching time! O moments big as years!
All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth.

And press it so upon our weary griefs
That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
Saturn, sleep on:—O thoughtless, why did I
Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?
Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?
Saturn, sleep on! while at thy feet I weep.”

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
Those green-robed senators of mighty woods,
Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,
Save from one gradual solitary gust
Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
As if the ebbing air had but one wave:
So came these words and went; the while in tears
She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground,
Just where her falling hair might be outspread
A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.
One moon, with alternations slow, had shed
Her silver seasons four upon the night,
And still these two were postured motionless,
Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern;
The frozen God still couchant on the earth,
And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet:
Until at length old Saturn lifted up
His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone,
And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
And that fair kneeling Goddess; and then spake
As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard
Shook horrid with such aspen malady:
“ O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,

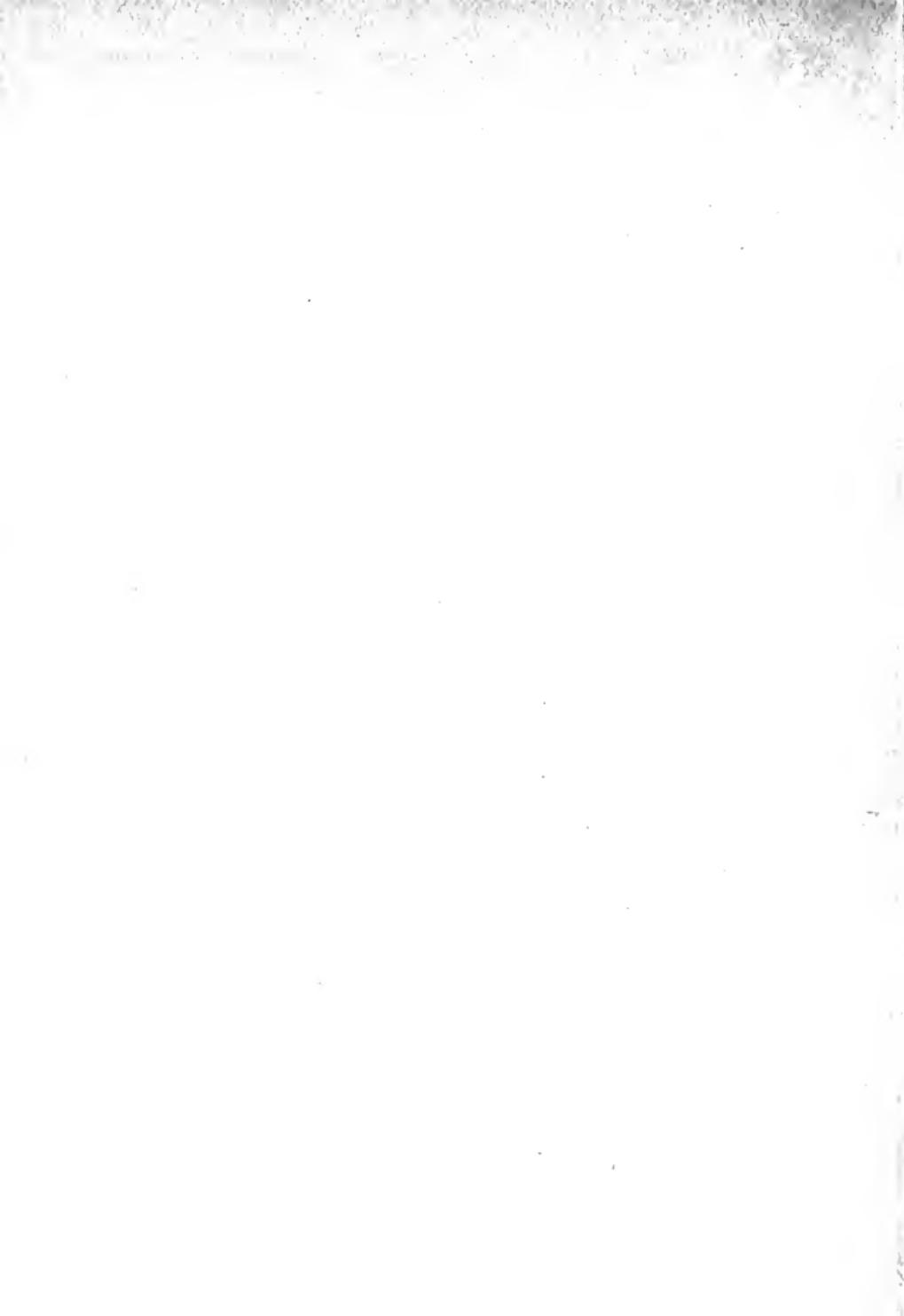
Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face;
Look up, and let me see our doom in it;
Look up, and tell me, if this feeble shape
Is Saturn's; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice
Of Saturn; tell me, if this wrinkling brow,
Naked and bare of its great diadem,
Peers like the front of Saturn? Who had power
To make me desolate? whence came the strength?
How was it nurtured to such bursting forth,
While Fate seem'd strangled in my nervous grasp?
But it is so; and I am smother'd up,
And buried from all godlike exercise
Of influence benign on planets pale,
Of admonitions to the winds and seas,
Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting,
And all those acts which Deity supreme
Doth ease its heart of love in. I am gone
Away from my own bosom: I have left
My strong identity, my real self,
Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit
Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search,
Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round
Upon all space: space starr'd, and lorn of light,
Space region'd with life-air, and barren void,
Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell.
Search, Thea, search! and tell me if thou seest
A certain shape or shadow, making way
With wings or chariot fierce to reposess
A heaven he lost erewhile: it must—it must
Be of ripe progress—Saturn must be king!
Yes, there must be a golden victory;

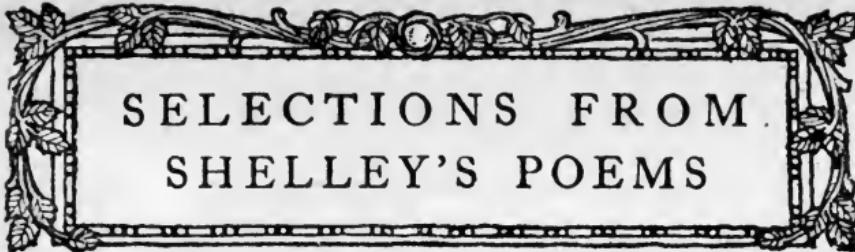
There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets blown
Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival
Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,
Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir
Of strings in hollow shells; and there shall be
Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
Of the sky-children; I will give command:
Thea! Thea! Thea! where is Saturn? "

LAST SONNET

Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art,
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient, sleepless Eremit,
The moving waters of their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—
No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

SELECTIONS FROM
SHELLEY'S POEMS





SELECTIONS FROM SHELLEY'S POEMS

MUTABILITY

We are as clouds that veil the midnight moon;
How restlessly they speed, and gleam, and quiver,
Streaking the darkness radiantly!—yet soon
Night closes round, and they are lost for ever;

Or like forgotten lyres, whose dissonant strings
Give various response to each varying blast,
To whose frail frame no second motion brings
One mood or modulation like the last.

We rest.—A dream has power to poison sleep;
We rise.—One wandering thought pollutes the day;
We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep;
Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away:

It is the same!—For, be it joy or sorrow,
The path of its departure still is free:
Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow;
Nought may endure but Mutability.

A SUMMER EVENING CHURCHYARD
LECHLADE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

THE wind has swept from the wide atmosphere
Each vapour that obscured the sunset's ray;
And pallid Evening twines its beaming hair
In duskier braids around the languid eyes of Day:
Silence and Twilight, unbeloved of men,
Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.

They breathe their spells towards the departing day,
Encompassing the earth, air, stars, and sea;
Light, sound, and motion own the potent sway,
Responding to the charm with its own mystery.
The winds are still, or the dry church-tower grass
Knows not their gentle motions as they pass.

Thou too, aëreal Pile! whose pinnacles
Point from one shrine like pyramids of fire,
Obeyest in silence their sweet solemn spells,
Clothing in hues of heaven thy dim and distant spire,
Around whose lessening and invisible height
Gather among the stars the clouds of night.

The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres:
And, mouldering as they sleep, a thrilling sound,
Half sense, half thought, among the darkness stirs,
Breathed from their wormy beds all living things around,
And mingling with the still night and mute sky
Its awful hush is felt inaudibly.

Thus solemnised and softened, death is mild
And terrorless as this serenest night:
Here could I hope, like some inquiring child
Sporting on graves, that death did hide from human
sight
Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep
That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep.

TO WORDSWORTH

POET of Nature, thou hast wept to know
That things depart which never may return:
Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow,
Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.
These common woes I feel. One loss is mine
Which thou too feel'st, yet I alone deplore.
Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine
On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar:
Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood
Above the blind and battling multitude:
In honoured poverty thy voice did weave
Songs consecrate to truth and liberty,—
Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,
Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.

FEELINGS OF A REPUBLICAN ON THE FALL
OF BONAPARTE

I HATED thee, fallen tyrant! I did groan
To think that a most unambitious slave,
Like thou, shouldst dance and revel on the grave
Of Liberty. Thou mightst have built thy throne
Where it had stood even now: thou didst prefer
A frail and bloody pomp which Time has swept
In fragments towards Oblivion. Massacre,
For this I prayed, would on thy sleep have crept,
Treason and Slavery, Rapine, Fear, and Lust,
And stifled thee, their minister. I know
Too late, since thou and France are in the dust,
That Virtue owns a more eternal foe
Than Force or Fraud: old Custom, legal Crime,
And bloody Faith the foulest birth of Time.

MONT BLANC

LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI

I

THE everlasting universe of things
Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,
Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom—
Now lending splendour, where from secret springs
The source of human thought its tribute brings
Of waters,—with a sound but half its own,
Such as a feeble brook will oft assume
In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,

Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,
Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river
Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

II

Thus thou, Ravine of Arve—dark, deep Ravine—
Thou many-coloured, many-voicèd vale,
Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail
Fast cloud-shadows and sunbeams: awful scene,
Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down
From the ice-gulfs that gird his secret throne,
Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame
Of lightning through the tempest;—thou dost lie,
Thy giant brood of pines around thee clinging,
Children of elder time, in whose devotion
The chainless winds still come and ever came
To drink their odours, and their mighty swinging
To hear—an old and solemn harmony;
Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep
Of the aethereal waterfall, whose veil
Robes some unsculptured image; the strange sleep
Which when the voices of the desert fail
Wraps all in its own deep eternity;—
Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's commotion,
A loud, lone sound no other sound can tame;
Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,
Thou art the path of that unresting sound—
Dizzy Ravine! and when I gaze on thee
I seem as in a trance sublime and strange
To muse on my own separate fantasy,

My own, my human mind, which passively
Now renders and receives fast influencings,
Holding an unremitting interchange
With the clear universe of things around;
One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings
Now float above thy darkness, and now rest
Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,
In the still cave of the witch Poesy,
Seeking among the shadows that pass by
Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee,
Some phantom, some faint image; till the breast
From which they fled recalls them, thou art there!

III

Some say that gleams of a remoter world
Visit the soul in sleep,—that death is slumber,
And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber
Of those who wake and live.—I look on high;
Has some unknown omnipotence unfurled
The veil of life and death? or do I lie
In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep
Spread far around and inaccessible
Its circles? For the very spirit fails,
Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep
That vanishes among the viewless gales!
Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky,
Mont Blanc appears,—still, snowy, and serene—
Its subject mountains their unearthly forms
Pile around it, ice and rock; broad vales between
Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,

Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread
And wind among the accumulated steeps;
A desert peopled by the storms alone,
Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone,
And the wolf tracks her there—how hideously
Its shapes are heaped around! rude, bare, and high,
Ghastly, and scarred, and riven.—Is this the scene
Where the old Earthquake-daemon taught her young
Ruin? Where these their toys? or did a sea,
Of fire envelop once this silent snow?
None can reply—all seems eternal now.
The wilderness has a mysterious tongue
Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,
So solemn so serene, that man may be,
But for such faith, with nature reconciled;
Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal
Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood
By all, but which the wise, and great, and good
Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

IV

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams,
Ocean, and all the living things that dwell
Within the daedal earth; lightning, and rain,
Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,
The torpor of the year when feeble dreams
Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep
Holds every future leaf and flower;—the bound
With which from that detested trance they leap;
The works and ways of man, their death and birth,

And that of him and all that his may be;
All things that move and breathe with toil and sound
Are born and die; revolve, subside, and swell.
Power dwells apart in its tranquillity,
Remote, serene, and inaccessible:
And *this*, the naked countenance of earth,
On which I gaze, even these primaeval mountains
Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep
Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far
fountains,
Slow rolling on; there, many a precipice,
Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power
Have piled: dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,
A city of death, distinct with many a tower
And wall impregnable of beaming ice.
Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin
Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky
Rolls its perpetual stream; vast pines are strewing
Its destined path, or in the mangled soil
Branchless and shattered stand; the rocks, drawn down
From yon remotest waste, have overthrown
The limits of the dead and living world,
Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place
Of insects, beasts, and birds, becomes its spoil;
Their food and their retreat for ever gone,
So much of life and joy is lost. The race
Of man flies far in dread; his work and dwelling
Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,
And their place is not known. Below, vast caves
Shine in the rushing torrents' restless gleam,
Which from those secret chasms in tumult welling

Meet in the vale, and one majestic River,
The breath and blood of distant lands, for ever
Rolls its loud waters to the ocean-waves,
Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air.

V

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high:—the power is there,
The still and solemn power of many sights,
And many sounds, and much of life and death.
In the calm darkness of the moonless nights,
In the lone glare of day, the snows descend
Upon that Mountain; none beholds them there,
Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,
Or the star-beams dart through them:—Winds contend
Silently there, and heap the snow with breath
Rapid and strong, but silently! Its home
The voiceless lightning in these solitudes
Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods
Over the snow. The secret Strength of things
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome
Of Heaven is as a law, inhabits thee!
And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
If to the human mind's imaginings
Silence and solitude were vacancy?

OZYMANDIAS

I MET a traveller from an antique land,
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,

Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read,
Which yet survive stamped on these lifeless things
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
“ My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair! ”
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions.

The phenomenon alluded to at the conclusion of the third stanza is well known to naturalists. The vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of rivers, and of lakes, sympathises with that of the land in the change of seasons; and is consequently influenced by the winds which announce it.

I

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the waves' intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

v

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
 Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
 Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, Wind,
 If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

I

THE fountains mingle with the river
 And the rivers with the Ocean,
 The winds of Heaven mix for ever
 With a sweet emotion;
 Nothing in the world is single;
 All things by a law divine
 In one spirit meet and mingle.
 Why not I with thine?—

II

See the mountains kiss high Heaven
 And the waves clasp one another;
 No sister-flower would be forgiven
 If it disdained its brother;
 And the sunlight clasps the earth
 And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
 What is all this sweet work worth
 If thou kiss not me?

THE INDIAN SERENADE

I

I ARISE from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Hath led me—who knows how?—
To thy chamber window, Sweet!

II

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream—
The Champak odours fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart;—
As I must on thine,
Belovèd as thou art!

III

O lift me from the grass!
I die! I faint! I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale,

My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast;—
Oh! press it close to thine again,
Where it will break at last.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

PART FIRST

A SENSITIVE Plant in a garden grew,
And the young winds fed it with silver dew,
And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,
And closed them beneath the kisses of Night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair,
Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere;
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss
In the garden, the field, or the wilderness,
Like a doe in the noontide with love's sweet want,
As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

The snowdrop, and then the violet,
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,
And their breath was mixed with fresh odour, sent
From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip tall,
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,
Till they die of their own dear loveliness;

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,
Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
Through their pavilions of tender green;

And the hyacinth purple, and white, and blue,
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
It was felt like an odour within the sense;

And the rose like a nymph to the bath addressed
Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,
Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air
The soul of her beauty and love lay bare:

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,
As a Maenad, its moonlight-coloured cup,
Till the fiery star, which is its eye,
Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky;

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tuberose,
The sweetest flower for scent that blows;
And all rare blossoms from every clime
Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

And on the stream whose inconstant bosom
Was pranked, under boughs of embowering blossom,
With golden and green light, slanting through
Their heaven of many a tangled hue,

Broad water-lilies lay tremulously,
And starry river-buds glimmered by,
And around them the soft stream did glide and dance
With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,
Which led through the garden along and across,
Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,
Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,

Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells
As fair as the fabulous asphodels,
And flow'rets which, drooping as day drooped too,
Fell into pavilions, white, purple, and blue,
To roof the glow-worm from the evening dew.

And from this undefilèd Paradise
The flowers (as an infant's awakening eyes
Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet
Can first lull, and at last must awaken it),

When Heaven's blithe winds had unfolded them,
As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,
Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one
Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun;

For each one was interpenetrated
With the light and the odour its neighbour shed,
Like young lovers whom youth and love make dear,
Wrapped and filled by their mutual atmosphere.

But the Sensitive Plant which could give small fruit
Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the root,
Received more than all, it loved more than ever,
Where none wanted but it, could belong to the giver:

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower;
Radiance and odour are not its dower;
It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full,
It desires what it has not, the Beautiful!

The light winds which from unsustaining wings
Shed the music of many murmurings;
The beams which dart from many a star
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar;

The plumèd insects swift and free,
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,
Laden with light and odour, which pass
Over the gleam of the living grass;

The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,
Then wander like spirits among the spheres,
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears;

The quivering vapours of dim noontide,
Which like a sea o'er the warm earth glide,
In which every sound, and odour and beam,
Move, as reeds in a single stream;

Each and all like ministering angels were
For the Sensitive Plant sweet joy to bear,
Whilst the lagging hours of the day went by
Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky.

And when evening descended from Heaven above,
And the Earth was all rest, and the air was all love,
And delight, though less bright, was far more deep,
And the day's veil fell from the world of sleep,

And the beasts, and the birds, and the insects were
drowned
In an ocean of dreams without a sound;
Whose waves never mark, though they ever impress
The light sand which paves it, consciousness;

(Only overhead the sweet nightingale
Ever sang more sweet as the day might fail,
And snatches of its Elysian chant
Were mixed with the dreams of the Sensitive Plant);—

The Sensitive Plant was the earliest
Upgathered into the bosom of rest;
A sweet child weary of its delight,
The feeblest and yet the favourite,
Cradled within the embrace of Night.

PART SECOND

There was a Power in this sweet place,
An Eve in this Eden; a ruling Grace
Which to the flowers, did they waken or dream,
Was as God is to the starry scheme.

A Lady, the wonder of her kind,
Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind
Which, dilating, had moulded her mien and motion
Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean,

Tended the garden from morn to even:
And the meteors of that sublunar Heaven,
Like the lamps of the air when Night walks forth,
Laughed round her footsteps up from the Earth!

She had no companion of mortal race,
But her tremulous breath and her flushing face
Told, whilst the morn kissed the sleep from her eyes,
That her dreams were less slumber than Paradise:

As if some bright Spirit for her sweet sake
Had deserted Heaven while the stars were awake,
As if yet around her he lingering were,
Though the veil of daylight concealed him from her.

Her step seemed to pity the grass it pressed;
You might hear by the heaving of her breast,
That the coming and going of the wind
Brought pleasure there and left passion behind.

And wherever her airy footstep trod,
Her trailing hair from the grassy sod
Eras'd its light vestige, with shadowy sweep;
Like a sunny storm o'er the dark green deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet;
I doubt not they felt the spirit that came
From her glowing fingers through all their frame.

She sprinkled bright water from the stream
On those that were faint with the sunny beam;
And out of the cups of the heavy flowers
She emptied the rain of the thunder-showers.

She lifted their head with her tender hands,
And sustained them with rods and osier-bands;
If the flowers had been her own infants, she
Could never have nursed them more tenderly.

And all killing insects and gnawing worms,
And things of obscene and unlovely forms,
She bore, in a basket of Indian woof,
Into the rough woods far aloof,—

In a basket, of grasses and wild-flowers full,
The freshest her gentle hands could pull
For the poor banished insects, whose intent,
Although they did ill, was innocent.

But the bee and the beamlike ephemeris
Whose path is the lightning's, and soft moths that kiss
The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not, did she
Make her attendant angels be.

And many an antenatal tomb,
Where butterflies dream of the life to come,
She left clinging round the smooth and dark
Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

This fairest creature from earliest Spring
Thus moved through the garden ministering
All the sweet season of Summertide,
And ere the first leaf looked brown—she died!

PART THIRD

Three days the flowers of the garden fair,
Like stars when the moon is awakened, were,
Or the waves of Baiae, ere luminous
She floats up through the smoke of Vesuvius.

And on the fourth, the Sensitive Plant
Felt the sound of the funeral chant,
And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,
And the sobs of the mourners, deep and low;

The weary sound and the heavy breath,
And the silent motions of passing death,
And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,
Sent through the pores of the coffin-plank;

The dark grass, and the flowers among the grass,
Were bright with tears as the crowd did pass;
From their sighs the wind caught a mournful tone,
And sate in the pines, and gave groan for groan.

The garden, once fair, became cold and foul,
Like the corpse of her who had been its soul,
Which at first was lovely as if in sleep,
Then slowly changed till it grew a heap
To make men tremble who never weep.

Swift Summer into the Autumn flowed,
And frost in the mist of the morning rode,
Though the noonday sun looked clear and bright,
Mocking the spoil of the secret night.

The rose-leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,
Paved the turf and the moss below.
The lilies were drooping, and white, and wan,
Like the head and the skin of a dying man.

And Indian plants, of scent and hue
The sweetest that ever were fed on dew,
Leaf after leaf, day after day,
Were massed into the common clay,

And the leaves, brown, yellow, and grey, and red,
And white with the whiteness of what is dead,
Like troops of ghosts on the dry wind passed;
Their whistling noise made the birds aghast.

And the gusty winds waked the wingèd seeds
Out of their birthplace of ugly weeds,
Till they clung round many a sweet flower's stem,
Which rotted into the earth with them.

The water-blooms under the rivulet
Fell from the stalks on which they were set;
And the eddies drove them here and there,
As the winds did those of the upper air.

Then the rain came down, and the broken stalks
Were bent and tangled across the walks;
And the leafless network of parasite bowers
Massed into ruin; and all sweet flowers.

Between the time of the wind and the snow
All loathliest weeds began to grow,
Whose coarse leaves were splashed with many a speck,
Like the water-snake's belly and the toad's back.

And thistles, and nettles, and darnels rank,
And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock dank,
Stretched out its long and hollow shank,
And stifled the air till the dead wind stank.

And plants, at whose names the verse feels loath,
Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth,
Prickly, and pulpos, and blistering, and blue,
Livid, and starred with a lurid dew.

And agarics, and fungi, with mildew and mould
Started like mist from the wet ground cold;

Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead
With a spirit of growth had been animated!

Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,
Made the running rivulet thick and dumb,
And at its outlet flags huge as stakes
Dammed it up with roots knotted like water-snakes.

And hour by hour, when the air was still,
The vapours arose which have strength to kill;
At morn they were seen, at noon they were felt,
At night they were darkness no star could melt.

And unctuous meteors from spray to spray
Crept and flitted in broad noonday
Unseen; every branch on which they alit
By a venomous blight was burned and bit.

The Sensitive Plant, like one forbid,
Wept, and the tears within each lid
Of its folded leaves, which together grew,
Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

For the leaves soon fell, and the branches soon
By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn;
The sap shrank to the root through every pore
As blood to a heart that will beat no more.

For Winter came: the wind was his whip:
One choppy finger was on his lip:
He had torn the cataracts from the hills
And they clanked at his girdle like manacles;

His breath was a chain which without a sound
The earth, and the air, and the water bound;
He came, fiercely driven, in his chariot-throne
By the tenfold blasts of the Arctic zone.

Then the weeds which were forms of living death
Fled from the frost to the earth beneath.
Their decay and sudden flight from frost
Was but like the vanishing of a ghost!

And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant
The moles and the dormice died for want:
The birds dropped stiff from the frozen air
And were caught in the branches naked and bare.

First there came down a thawing rain
And its dull drops froze on the boughs again;
Then there steamed up a freezing dew
Which to the drops of the thaw-rain grew;

And a northern whirlwind, wandering about
Like a wolf that had smelt a dead child out,
Shook the boughs thus laden, and heavy, and stiff,
And snapped them off with his rigid griff.

When Winter had gone and Spring came back .
The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck;
But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and docks, and
darnels,
Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels.

CONCLUSION

Whether the Sensitive Plant, or that
Which within its boughs like a Spirit sat,
Ere its outward form had known decay,
Now felt this change, I cannot say.

Whether that Lady's gentle mind,
No longer with the form combined
Which scattered love, as stars do light,
Found sadness, where it left delight,

I dare not guess; but in this life
Of error, ignorance, and strife,
Where nothing is, but all things seem,
And we the shadows of the dream,

It is a modest creed, and yet
Pleasant if one considers it,
To own that death itself must be,
Like all the rest, a mockery.

That garden sweet, that lady fair,
And all sweet shapes and odours there,
In truth have never passed away:
'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed; not they.

For love, and beauty, and delight,
There is no death nor change: their might
Exceeds our organs, which endure
No light, being themselves obscure.

A VISION OF THE SEA

'Tis the terror of tempest. The rags of the sail
Are flickering in ribbons within the fierce gale:
From the stark night of vapours the dim rain is driven,
And when lightning is loosed, like a deluge from Heaven,
She sees the black trunks of the waterspouts spin
And bend, as if Heaven was ruining in,
Which they seemed to sustain with their terrible mass
As if ocean had sunk from beneath them: they pass
To their graves in the deep with an earthquake of sound,
And the waves and the thunders, made silent around,
Leave the wind to its echo. The vessel, now tossed
Through the low-trailing rack of the tempest, is lost
In the skirts of the thunder-cloud: now down the sweep
Of the wind-cloven wave to the chasm of the deep
It sinks, and the walls of the watery vale
Whose depths of dread calm are unmoved by the gale,
Dim mirrors of ruin, hang gleaming about;
While the surf, like a chaos of stars, like a rout
Of death-flames, like whirlpools of fire-flowing iron,
With splendour and terror the black ship environ,
Or like sulphur-flakes hurled from a mine of pale fire
In fountains spout o'er it. In many a spire
The pyramid-billows with white points of brine
In the cope of the lightning inconstantly shine,
As piercing the sky from the floor of the sea,
The great ship seems splitting! it cracks as a tree,
While an earthquake is splintering its root, ere the blast
Of the whirlwind that stripped it of branches has passed.

The intense thunder-balls which are raining from Heaven
Have shattered its mast, and it stands black and
riven.

The chinks suck destruction. The heavy dead hulk
On the living sea rolls an inanimate bulk,
Like a corpse on the clay which is hungering to fold
Its corruption around it. Meanwhile, from the hold,
One deck is burst up by the waters below,
And it splits like the ice when the thaw-breezes blow
O'er the lakes of the desert! Who sit on the other?
Is that all the crew that lie burying each other,
Like the dead in a breach, round the foremast? Are
those

Twin tigers, who burst, when the waters arose,
In the agony of terror, their chains in the hold
(What now makes them tame, is what then made them
bold);

Who crouch, side by side, and have driven, like a crank,
The deep grip of their claws through the vibrating
plank:—

Are these all? Nine weeks the tall vessel had lain
On the windless expanse of the watery plain,
Where the death-darting sun cast no shadow at noon,
And there seemed to be fire in the beams of the moon,
Till a lead-coloured fog gathered up from the deep,
Whose breath was quick pestilence; then, the cold sleep
Crept, like blight through the ears of a thick field of corn,
O'er the populous vessel. And even and morn,
With their hammocks for coffins, the seamen aghast
Like dead men the dead limbs of their comrades cast
Down the deep, which closed on them above and around,

And the sharks and the dogfish their grave-clothes
unbound,
And were glutted like Jews with this manna rained down
From God on their wilderness. One after one
The mariners died; on the eve of this day,
When the tempest was gathering in cloudy array,
But seven remained. Six the thunder has smitten,
And they lie black as mummies on which Time has written
His scorn of the embalmer; the seventh, from the deck
An oak-splinter pierced through his breast and his back,
And hung out to the tempest, a wreck on the wreck.
No more? At the helm sits a woman more fair
Than Heaven, when, unbinding its star-braided hair,
It sinks with the sun on the earth and the sea.
She clasps a bright child on her upgathered knee;
It laughs at the lightning, it mocks the mixed thunder
Of the air and the sea, with desire and with wonder
It is beckoning the tigers to rise and come near,
It would play with those eyes where the radiance of fear
Is outshining the meteors; its bosom beats high,
The heart-fire of pleasure has kindled its eye,
While its mother's is lustreless. "Smile not, my child,
But sleep deeply and sweetly, and so be beguiled
Of the pang that awaits us, whatever that be,
So dreadful since thou must divide it with me!
Dream, sleep! This pale bosom, thy cradle and bed,
Will it rock thee not, infant? 'Tis beating with dread!
Alas! what is life, what is death, what are we,
That when the ship sinks we no longer may be?
What! to see thee no more, and to feel thee no more?
Not to be after life what we have been before?

Not to touch those sweet hands? Not to look on those eyes,

Those lips, and that hair,—all that smiling disguise
Thou yet wearest, sweet Spirit, which I, day by day,
Have so long called my child, but which now fades away
Like a rainbow, and I the fallen shower?"—Lo! the ship
Is settling, it topples, the leeward ports dip;
The tigers leap up when they feel the slow brine
Crawling inch by inch on them; hair, ears, limbs, and
eyne,

Stand rigid with horror; a loud, long, hoarse cry
Bursts at once from their vitals tremendously,
And 'tis borne down the mountainous vale of the wave,
Rebounding, like thunder, from crag to cave,
Mixed with the clash of the lashing rain,
Hurried on by the might of the hurricane:
The hurricane came from the west, and passed on
By the path of the gate of the eastern sun,
Transversely dividing the stream of the storm;
As an arrowy serpent, pursuing the form
Of an elephant, bursts through the brakes of the waste.
Black as a cormorant, the screaming blast,
Between Ocean and Heaven, like an ocean, passed,
Till it came to the clouds on the verge of the world
Which, based on the sea and to Heaven upcurled,
Like columns and walls did surround and sustain
The dome of the tempest; it rent them in twain,
As a flood rends its barriers of mountainous crag:
And the dense clouds in many a ruin and rag,
Like the stones of a temple ere earthquake has passed,
Like the dust of its fall, on the whirlwind are cast;

They are scattered like foam on the torrent; and where
The wind has burst out through the chasm, from the air
Of clear morning the beams of the sunrise flow in,
Unimpeded, keen, golden, and crystalline,
Banded armies of light and of air; at one gate
They encounter, but interpenetrate.

And that breach in the tempest is widening away,
And the caverns of clouds are torn up by the day,
And the fierce winds are sinking with weary wings,
Lulled by the motion and murmurings
And the long grassy heave of the rocking sea;
And overhead glorious, but dreadful to see,
The wrecks of the tempest, like vapours of gold,
Are consuming in sunrise. The heaped waves behold
The deep calm of blue Heaven dilating above,
And, like passions made still by the presence of Love,
Beneath the clear surface reflecting its slide
Tremulous with soft influence; extending its tide
From the Andes to Atlas, round mountain and isle,
Round sea-birds and wrecks, paved with Heaven's azure
smile,

The wide world of waters is vibrating. Where
Is the ship? On the verge of the wave where it lay
One tiger is mingled in ghastly affray
With a sea-snake. The foam and the smoke of the
battle

Stain the clear air with sunbows; the jar, and the rattle
Of solid bones crushed by the infinite stress
Of the snake's adamantine voluminousness;
And the hum of the hot blood that spouts and rains
Where the grip of the tiger has wounded the veins

Swollen with rage, strength, and effort; the whirl and the splash

As of some hideous engine whose brazen teeth smash
The thin winds and soft waves into thunder; the streams
And hissing crawl fast o'er the smooth ocean streams,
Each sound like a centipede. Near this commotion,
A blue shark is hanging within the blue ocean,
The fin-wingèd tomb of the victor. The other
Is winning his way from the fate of his brother
To his own with the speed of despair. Lo! a boat
Advances; twelve rowers with the impulse of thought
Urge on the keen keel,—the brine foams. At the stern
Three marksmen stand levelling. Hot bullets burn
In the breast of the tiger, which yet bears him on
To his refuge and ruin. One fragment alone,—
'Tis dwindling and sinking, 'tis now almost gone,—
Of the wreck of the vessel peers out of the sea.
With her left hand she grasps it impetuously,
With her right she sustains her fair infant. Death, Fear,
Love, Beauty, are mixed in the atmosphere,
Which trembles and burns with the fervour of dread
Around her wild eyes, her bright hand, and her head,
Like a meteor of light o'er the waters! her child
Is yet smiling, and playing, and murmuring; so smiled
The false deep ere the storm. Like a sister and brother
The child and the ocean still smile on each other,
Whilst—

THE CLOUD

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,

Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in Heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine Sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead;
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when Sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardours of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of Heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine aery nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the Moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,

When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the Sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the Moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,—
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the Powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-coloured bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist Earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
And the nursling of the Sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when with never a stain
The pavilion of Heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

ARETHUSA

I

ARETHUSA arose
From her couch of snows
In the Acroceraunian mountains,—
 From cloud and from crag,
 With many a jag,
Shepherding her bright fountains.
 She leapt down the rocks,
 With her rainbow locks
Streaming among the streams;—
 Her steps paved with green
 The downward ravine
Which slopes to the western gleams;
 And gliding and springing
 She went, ever singing,
In murmurs as soft as sleep;
 The Earth seemed to love her,
 And Heaven smiled above her,
As she lingered towards the deep.

II

Then Alpheus bold,
On his glacier cold,
With his trident the mountains strook;
 And opened a chasm
 In the rocks—with the spasm
All Erymanthus shook.
 And the black south wind
 It unsealed behind

The urns of the silent snow,
And earthquake and thunder
Did rend in sunder
The bars of the springs below.
The beard and the hair
Of the River-god were
Seen through the torrent's sweep,
As he followed the light
Of the fleet nymph's flight
To the brink of the Dorian deep.

III

“ Oh, save me! Oh, guide me!
And bid the deep hide me,
For he grasps me now by the hair!”
The loud Ocean heard,
To its blue depth stirred,
And divided at her prayer;
And under the water
The Earth’s white daughter
Fled like a sunny beam;
Behind her descended
Her billows, unblended
With the brackish Dorian stream:—
Like a gloomy stain
On the emerald main
Alpheus rushed behind,—
As an eagle pursuing
A dove to its ruin
Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

IV

Under the bowers
Where the Ocean Powers
Sit on their pearlèd thrones;
Through the coral woods
Of the weltering floods,
Over heaps of unvalued stones;
Through the dim beams
Which amid the streams
Weave a network of coloured light;
And under the caves,
Where the shadowy waves
Are as green as the forest's night:—
Outspeeding the shark,
And the sword-fish dark,
Under the Ocean's foam,
And up through the rifts
Of the mountain cliffs
They passed to their Dorian home.

V

And now from their fountains
In Enna's mountains,
Down one vale where the morning basks
Like friends once parted
Grown single-hearted,
They ply their watery tasks.
At sunrise they leap
From their cradles steep

In the cave of the shelving hill;
 At noontide they flow
 Through the woods below
 And the meadows of asphodel;
 And at night they sleep
 In the rocking deep
 Beneath the Ortygian shore;—
 Like spirits that lie
 In the azure sky
 When they love but live no more.

SONG OF PROSERPINE

WHILE GATHERING FLOWERS ON THE PLAIN OF ENNA

I

SACRED Goddess, Mother Earth,
 Thou from whose immortal bosom
 Gods, and men, and beasts have birth,
 Leaf and blade, and bud and blossom,
 Breathe thine influence most divine
 On thine own child, Proserpine.

II

If with mists of evening dew
 Thou dost nourish these young flowers
 Till they grow, in scent and hue,
 Fairest children of the Hours,
 Breathe thine influence most divine
 On thine own child, Proserpine.

HYMN OF APOLLO

I

THE sleepless Hours who watch me as I lie,
Curtained with star-inwoven tapestries
From the broad moonlight of the sky,
Fanning the busy dreams from my dim eyes,—
Waken me when their Mother, the grey Dawn,
Tells them that dreams and that the moon is gone.

II

Then I arise, and climbing Heaven's blue dome,
I walk over the mountains and the waves,
Leaving my robe upon the ocean foam;
My footsteps pave the clouds with fire; the caves
Are filled with my bright presence, and the air
Leaves the green Earth to my embraces bare.

III

The sunbeams are my shafts, with which I kill
Deceit, that loves the night and fears the day;
All men who do or even imagine ill
Fly me, and from the glory of my ray
Good minds and open actions take new might,
Until diminished by the reign of Night.

IV

I feel the clouds, the rainbows and the flowers
With their aethereal colours; the moon's globe
And the pure stars in their eternal bowers
Are cinctured with my power as with a robe;
Whatever lamps on Earth or Heaven may shine
Are portions of one power, which is mine.

V

I stand at noon upon the peak of Heaven,
Then with unwilling steps I wander down
Into the clouds of the Atlantic even;
For grief that I depart they weep and frown:
What look is more delightful than the smile
With which I soothe them from the western isle?

VI

I am the eye with which the Universe
Beholds itself and knows itself divine;
All harmony of instrument or verse,
All prophecy, all medicine are mine,
All light of art or nature;—to my song
Victory and praise in its own right belong.

HYMN OF PAN

I

FROM the forests and highlands
 We come, we come;
From the river-girt islands,
 Where loud waves are dumb
 Listening to my sweet pipings.
The wind in the reeds and the rushes,
 The bees on the bells of thyme,
The birds on the myrtle bushes,
 The cicale above in the lime,
And the lizards below in the grass,
 Were as silent as ever old Tmolus was,
 Listening to my sweet pipings.

II

Liquid Peneus was flowing,
 And all dark Tempe lay
In Pelion's shadow, outgrowing
 The light of the dying day,
 Speeded by my sweet pipings.
The Sileni, and Sylvans, and Fauns,
 And the Nymphs of the woods and the waves,
To the edge of the moist river-lawns,
 And the brink of the dewy caves,
And all that did then attend and follow,
 Were silent with love, as you now, Apollo,
 With envy of my sweet pipings.

III

I sang of the dancing stars,
 I sang of the daedal Earth,
 And of Heaven—and the giant wars,
 And Love, and Death, and Birth,—
 And then I changed my pipings,—
 Singing how down the vale of Maenalus
 I pursued a maiden and clasped a reed.
 Gods and men, we are all deluded thus!
 It breaks in our bosom and then we bleed:
 All wept, as I think both ye now would,
 If envy or age had not frozen your blood
 At the sorrow of my sweet pipings.

THE QUESTION

I

I DREAMED that, as I wandered by the way,
 Bare Winter suddenly was changed to Spring,
 And gentle odours led my steps astray,
 Mixed with a sound of waters murmuring
 Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay
 Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling
 Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,
 But kissed it and then fled, as thou mightest in dream.

II

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets,
 Daisies, those pearléd Arcturi of the earth,
 The constellated flower that never sets;

Faint oxslops; tender bluebells, at whose birth
The sod scarce heaved; and that tall flower that wets—
Like a child, half in tenderness and mirth—
Its mother's face with Heaven's collected tears,
When the low wind, its playmate's voice, it hears.

III

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine,
Green cowbind and the moonlight-coloured may,
And cherry-blossoms, and white cups, whose wine
Was the bright dew, yet drained not by the day;
And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,
With its dark buds and leaves, wandering astray;
And flowers azure, black, and streaked with gold,
Fairer than any wakened eyes behold.

IV

And nearer to the river's trembling edge
There grew broad flag-flowers, purple pranked with
white,
And starry river buds among the sedge,
And floating water lilies, broad and bright,
Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge
With moonlight beams of their own watery light;
And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

v

Methought that of these visionary flowers
 I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
 That the same hues, which in their natural bowers
 Were mingled or opposed, the like array
 Kept these imprisoned children of the Hours
 Within my hand,—and then, elate and gay,
 I hastened to the spot whence I had come,
 That I might there present it!—Oh! to whom?

TO A SKYLARK

HAIL to thee, blithe Spirit!
 Bird thou never wert,
 That from Heaven, or near it,
 Pourest thy full heart
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
 From the earth thou springest
 Like a cloud of fire;
 The blue deep thou wingest,
 And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
 Of the sunken sun,
 O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
 Thou dost float and run;
 Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
 Melts around thy flight;
 Like a star of Heaven,
 In the broad daylight
 Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
 Of that silver sphere,
 Whose intense lamp narrows
 In the white dawn clear
 Until we hardly see—we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
 With thy voice is loud,
 As, when night is bare,
 From one lonely cloud
 The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is over-
 flowed.

What thou art we know not;
 What is most like thee?
 From rainbow clouds there flow not
 Drops so bright to see
 As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a Poet hidden
 In the light of thought,
 Singing hymns unbidden,
 Till the world is wrought
 To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
 In a palace-tower,
 Soothing her love-laden
 Soul in secret hour

With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
 In a dell of dew,
 Scattering un beholden
 Its aëreal hue

Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view!

Like a rose embowered
 In its own green leaves,
 By warm winds deflowered,
 Till the scent it gives

Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy wingèd thieves:

Sound of vernal showers
 On the twinkling grass,
 Rain-awakened flowers,
 All that ever was

Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass:

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
 What sweet thoughts are thine:
 I have never heard
 Praise of love or wine

That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,
 Or triumphal chant,
 Matched with thine would be all
 But an empty vaunt,
 A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
 Of thy happy strain?
 What fields, or waves, or mountains?
 What shapes of sky or plain?
 What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
 Languor cannot be:
 Shadow of annoyance
 Never came near thee:
 Thou lovest—but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
 Thou of death must deem
 Things more true and deep
 Than we mortals dream,
 Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
 And pine for what is not:
 Our sincerest laughter
 With some pain is fraught;
 Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
 Hate, and pride, and fear;
 If we were things born
 Not to shed a tear,
 I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
 Of delightful sound,
 Better than all treasures
 That in books are found,
 Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
 That thy brain must know,
 Such harmonious madness
 From my lips would flow
 The world should listen then—as I am listening now.

ODE TO LIBERTY

Yet, Freedom, yet, thy banner, torn by flying,
 Streams like a thunder-storm against the wind.—BYRON.

I

A GLORIOUS people vibrated again
 The lightning of the nations: Liberty
 From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er Spain,
 Scattering contagious fire into the sky,
 Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay,

And in the rapid plumes of song
Clothed itself, sublime and strong
(As a young eagle soars the morning clouds among),
Hovering in verse o'er its accustomed prey;
Till from its station in the Heaven of fame
The Spirit's whirlwind rapt it, and the ray
Of the remotest sphere of living flame
Which paves the void was from behind it flung,
As foam from a ship's swiftness, when there came
A voice out of the deep: I will record the same.

II

" The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang forth:
The burning stars of the abyss were hurled
Into the depths of Heaven. The daedal Earth,
That island in the ocean of the world,
Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air:
But this divinest universe
Was yet a chaos and a curse,
For thou wert not: but, power from worst producing
worse,
The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,
And of the birds, and of the watery forms,
And there was war among them, and despair
Within them, raging without truce or terms:
The bosom of their violated nurse
Groaned, for beasts warred on beasts, and worms on
worms,
And men on men; each heart was as a hell of storms.

III

" Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied
His generations under the pavilion
Of the Sun's throne: palace and pyramid,
Temple and prison, to many a swarming million
Were, as to mountain-wolves their raggèd caves.
This human living multitude
Was savage, cunning, blind, and rude,
For thou wert not; but o'er the populous solitude,
Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves,
Hung Tyranny; beneath, sate deified
The sister-pest, congregator of slaves;
Into the shadow of her pinions wide
Anarchs and priests, who feed on gold and blood
Till with the stain their inmost souls are dyed,
Drove the astonished herds of men from every side.

IV

" The nodding promontories, and blue isles,
And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous waves
Of Greece, basked glorious in the open smiles
Of favouring Heaven: from their enchanted caves
Prophetic echoes flung dim melody.
On the unapprehensive wild,
The vine, the corn, the olive mild,
Grew savage yet, to human use unreconciled;
And, like unfolded flowers beneath the sea,
Like the man's thought dark in the infant's brain,
Like aught that is which wraps what is to be,
Art's deathless dreams lay veiled by many a vein

Of Parian stone; and, yet a speechless child,
 Verse murmured, and Philosophy did strain
 Her lidless eyes for thee; when o'er the Aegean main

V

“ Athens arose: a city such as vision
 Builds from the purple crags and silver towers
 Of battlemented cloud, as in derision
 Of kingliest masonry: the ocean-floors
 Pave it; the evening sky pavilions it;
 Its portals are inhabited
 By thunder-zonèd winds, each head
 Within its cloudy wings with sun-fire garlanded,—
 A divine work! Athens, diviner yet,
 Gleamed with its crest of columns, on the will
 Of man, as on a mount of diamond, set;
 For thou wert, and thine all-creative skill
 Peopled, with forms that mock the eternal dead
 In marble immortality, that hill
 Which was thine earliest throne and latest oracle.

VI

“ Within the surface of Time's fleeting river
 Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay
 Immovably unquiet, and for ever
 It trembles, but it cannot pass away!
 The voices of thy bards and sages thunder
 With an earth-awakening blast
 Through the caverns of the past:
 Religion veils her eyes; Oppression shrinks aghast:

A wingèd sound of joy, and love, and wonder,
 Which soars where Expectation never flew,
 Rending the veil of space and time asunder!

One ocean feeds the clouds, and streams, and dew;
 One Sun illumines Heaven; one Spirit vast
 With life and love makes chaos ever new,
 As Athens doth the world with thy delight renew.

VII

" Then Rome was, and from thy deep bosom fairest,
 Like a wolf-cub from a Cadmaean Maenad,¹
 She drew the milk of greatness, though thy dearest
 From that Elysian food was yet unweanèd;
 And many a deed of terrible uprightness
 By thy sweet love was sanctified;
 And in thy smile, and by thy side,
 Saintly Camillus lived, and firm Atilius died.
 But when tears stained thy robe of vestal whiteness,
 And gold profaned thy Capitolian throne,
 Thou didst desert, with spirit-wingèd lightness,
 The senate of the tyrants: they sunk prone
 Slaves of one tyrant: Palatinus sighed
 Faint echoes of Ionian song; that tone
 Thou didst delay to hear, lamenting to disown.

VIII

" From what Hyrcanian glen or frozen hill,
 Or piny promontory of the Arctic main,

¹ See the *Bacchae* of Euripides.

Or utmost islet inaccessible,
 Didst thou lament the ruin of thy reign,
 Teaching the woods and waves, and desert rocks,
 And every Naiad's ice-cold urn,
 To talk in echoes sad and stern
 Of that sublimest love which man had dared unlearn?
 For neither didst thou watch the wizard flocks
 Of the Scald's dreams, nor haunt the Druid's
 sleep.
 What if the tears rained through thy scattered locks
 Were quickly dried? for thou didst groan, not weep,
 When from its sea of death, to kill and burn,
 The Galilean serpent forth did creep,
 And made thy world an undistinguishable heap.

IX

“A thousand years the Earth cried, ‘Where art thou?’
 And then the shadow of thy coming fell
 On Saxon Alfred’s olive-cinctured brow:
 And many a warrior-peopled citadel,
 Like rocks which fire lifts out of the flat deep,
 Arose in sacred Italy,
 Frowning o’er the tempestuous sea
 Of Kings, and priests, and slaves, in tower-crowned
 majesty;
 That multitudinous anarchy did sweep
 And burst around their walls, like idle foam,
 Whilst from the human spirit’s deepest deep
 Strange melody with love and awe struck dumb
 Dissonant arms; and Art, which cannot die,

With divine wand traced on our earthly home
Fit imagery to pave Heaven's everlasting dome.

X

"Thou huntress swifter than the Moon! thou terror
Of the world's wolves! thou bearer of the quiver,
Whose sunlike shafts pierce tempest-wingèd Error,
As light may pierce the clouds when they dissever
In the calm regions of the orient day!

Luther caught thy wakening glance;
Like lightning, from his leaden lance
Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the trance
In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay;
And England's prophets hailed thee as their queen,
In songs whose music cannot pass away,
Though it must flow forever: not unseen
Before the spirit-sighted countenance
Of Milton didst thou pass, from the sad scene
Beyond whose night he saw, with a dejected mien.

XI

"The eager hours and unreluctant years
As on a dawn-illumined mountain stood,
Trampling to silence their loud hopes and fears,
Darkening each other with their multitude,
And cried aloud, 'Liberty!' Indignation
Answered Pity from her cave;
Death grew pale within the grave,
And Desolation howled to the destroyer, Save!
When like Heaven's Sun girt by the exhalation

Of its own glorious light, thou didst arise,
 Chasing thy foes from nation unto nation
 Like shadows: as if day had cloven the skies
 At dreaming midnight o'er the western wave,
 Men started, staggering with a glad surprise,
 Under the lightnings of thine unfamiliar eyes.

XII

"Thou Heaven of earth! what spells could pall thee then
 In ominous eclipse? a thousand years
 Bred from the slime of deep Oppression's den,
 Dyed all thy liquid light with blood and tears,
 Till thy sweet stars could weep the stain away;
 How like Bacchanals of blood
 Round France, the ghastly vintage, stood
 Destruction's sceptred slaves, and Folly's mitred brood!
 When one, like them, but mightier far than they,
 The Anarch of thine own bewildered powers,
 Rose: armies mingled in obscure array,
 Like clouds with clouds, darkening the sacred
 bowers
 Of serene Heaven. He, by the past pursued,
 Rests with those dead, but unforgotten hours,
 Whose ghosts scare victor kings in their ancestral
 towers.

XIII

"England yet sleeps: was she not called of old?
 Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling thunder
 Vesuvius wakens Aetna, and the cold
 Snow-crags by its reply are cloven in sunder:

O'er the lit waves every Aeolian isle
 From Pithecusa to Pelorus
 Howls, and leaps, and glares in chorus:
 They cry, 'Be dim; ye lamps of Heaven suspended
 o'er us!'
 Her chains are threads of gold, she need but smile
 And they dissolve; but Spain's were links of steel,
 Till bit to dust by virtue's keenest file.
 Twins of a single destiny! appeal
 To the eternal years enthroned before us
 In the dim West; impress as from a seal,
 All ye have thought and done! Time cannot dare
 conceal.

XIV

"Tomb of Arminius! render up thy dead
 Till, like a standard from a watch-tower's staff,
 His soul may stream over the tyrant's head;
 Thy victory shall be his epitaph,
 Wild Bacchanal of truth's mysterious wine,
 King-deluded Germany,
 His dead spirit lives in thee.
 Why do we fear or hope? thou art already free!
 And thou, lost Paradise of this divine
 And glorious world! thou flowery wilderness!
 Thou island of eternity! thou shrine
 Where Desolation, clothed with loveliness,
 Worships the thing thou wert! O Italy,
 Gather thy blood into thy heart; repress
 The beasts who make their dens thy sacred palaces.

XV

" Oh, that the free would stamp the impious name
 Of KING into the dust! or write it there,
 So that this blot upon the page of fame
 Were as a serpent's path, which the light air
 Erases, and the flat sands close behind!

Ye the oracle have heard:
 Lift the victory-flashing sword,
 And cut the snaky knots of this foul gordian word,
 Which, weak itself as stubble, yet can bind
 Into a mass, irrefragably firm,
 The axes and the rods which awe mankind;
 The sound has poison in it, 'tis the sperm
 Of what makes life foul, cancerous, and abhorred;
 Disdain not thou, at thine appointed term,
 To set thine armèd heel on this reluctant worm.

XVI

" Oh, that the wise from their bright minds would kindle
 Such lamps within the dome of this dim world,
 That the pale name of PRIEST might shrink and dwindle
 Into the hell from which it first was hurled,
 A scoff of impious pride from fiends impure;
 Till human thoughts might kneel alone,
 Each before the judgment-throne
 Of its own aweless soul, or of the Power unknown!
 Oh, that the words which make the thoughts obscure
 From which they spring, as clouds of glimmering
 dew

From a white lake blot Heaven's blue portraiture,

Were stripped of their thin masks and various hue
And frowns and smiles and splendours not their own,

Till in the nakedness of false and true

They stand before their Lord, each to receive its due!

XVII

" He who taught man to vanquish whatsoever

Can be between the cradle and the grave

Crowned him the King of Life. Oh, vain endeavour!

If on his own high will, a willing slave,

He has enthroned the oppression and the oppressor.

What if earth can clothe and feed

Amplest millions at their need,

And power in thought be as the tree within the seed?

Or what if Art, an ardent intercessor,

Driving on fiery wings to Nature's throne,

Checks the great mother stooping to caress her,

And cries: ' Give me, thy child, dominion

Over all height and depth '? if Life can breed

New wants, and wealth from those who toil and groan,

Rend of thy gifts and hers a thousandfold for one!

XVIII

" Come thou, but lead out of the inmost cave

Of man's deep spirit, as the morning-star

Beckons the Sun from the Eoan wave,

Wisdom. I hear the pennons of her car

Self-moving, like cloud charioted by flame;

Comes she not, and come ye not,
 Rulers of eternal thought,
 To judge, with solemn truth, life's ill-apportioned lot?
 Blind Love, and equal Justice, and the Fame
 Of what has been, the Hope of what will be?
 O Liberty! if such could be thy name
 Wert thou disjoined from these, or they from thee:
 If thine or theirs were treasures to be bought
 By blood or tears, have not the wise and free
 Wept tears, and blood like tears?" — The solemn
 harmony

XIX

Paused, and the Spirit of that mighty singing
 To its abyss was suddenly withdrawn;
 Then, as a wild swan, when sublimely winging
 Its path athwart the thunder-smoke of dawn,
 Sinks headlong through the aereal golden light
 On the heavy-sounding plain,
 When the bolt has pierced its brain;
 As summer clouds dissolve, unburthened of their rain;
 As a far taper fades with fading night,
 As a brief insect dies with dying day,—
 My song, its pinions disarrayed of might,
 Drooped; o'er it closed the echoes far away
 Of the great voice which did its flight sustain,
 As waves which lately paved his watery way
 Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous
 play.

AUTUMN: A DIRGE

I

THE warm sun is failing, the bleak wind is wailing,
The bare boughs are sighing, the pale flowers are dying,
 And the Year
On the earth her death-bed, in a shroud of leaves dead,
 Is lying.

Come, Months, come away,
From November to May,
In your saddest array;
Follow the bier
Of the dead cold Year,
And like dim shadows watch by her sepulchre.

II

The chill rain is falling, the nipped worm is crawling,
The rivers are swelling, the thunder is knelling
 For the Year;
The blithe swallows are flown, and the lizards each gone
 To his dwelling;
Come, Months, come away;
Put on white, black, and grey;
Let your light sisters play—
Ye, follow the bier
Of the dead cold Year,
And make her grave green with tear on tear.

DIRGE FOR THE YEAR

I

ORPHAN Hours, the Year is dead,
Come and sigh, come and weep!
Merry Hours, smile instead,
For the Year is but asleep.
See, it smiles as it is sleeping,
Mocking your untimely weeping.

II

As an earthquake rocks a corse
In its coffin in the clay,
So White Winter, that rough nurse,
Rocks the death-cold Year to-day;
Solemn Hours! wail aloud
For your mother in her shroud.

III

As the wild air stirs and sways
The tree-swung cradle of a child,
So the breath of these rude days
Rocks the Year:—be calm and mild,
Trembling Hours, she will arise
With new love within her eyes.

IV

January grey is here,
Like a sexton by her grave;
February bears the bier,
March with grief doth howl and rave,
And April weeps—but, O ye Hours!
Follow with May's fairest flowers.

TO NIGHT

I

SWIFTLY walk o'er the western wave,
Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where, all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear,—
Swift be thy flight!

II

Wrap thy form in a mantle grey,
Star-inwrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day;
Kiss her until she be wearied out,
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand—
Come, long-sought!

III

When I arose and saw the dawn,
I sighed for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
I sighed for thee.

IV

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
Wouldst thou me?
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmured like a noontide bee,
Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me?—And I replied,
No, not thee!

V

Death will come when thou art dead,
Soon, too soon—
Sleep will come when thou art fled;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, belovèd Night—
Swift be thine approaching flight,
Come soon, soon!

SONG

I

RARELY, rarely, comest thou,
 Spirit of Delight!
 Wherefore hast thou left me now
 Many a day and night?
 Many a weary night and day
 'Tis since thou art fled away.

II

How shall ever one like me
 Win thee back again?
 With the joyous and the free
 Thou wilt scoff at pain.
 Spirit false! thou hast forgot
 All but those who need thee not.

III

As a lizard with the shade
 Of a trembling leaf,
 Thou with sorrow art dismayed;
 Even the sighs of grief
 Reproach thee, that thou art not near,
 And reproach thou wilt not hear.

IV

Let me set my mournful ditty
 To a merry measure;
 Thou wilt never come for pity,
 Thou wilt come for pleasure;
 Pity then will cut away
 Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

V

I love all that thou lovest,
 Spirit of Delight!
 The fresh Earth in new leaves dressed,
 And the starry night;
 Autumn evening, and the morn
 When the golden mists are born.

VI

I love snow, and all the forms
 Of the radiant frost;
 I love waves, and winds, and storms,
 Everything almost
 Which is Nature's, and may be
 Untainted by man's misery.

VII

I love tranquil solitude,
 And such society
 As is quiet, wise, and good;
 Between thee and me
 What difference? but thou dost possess
 The things I seek, not love them less.

VIII

I love Love—though he has wings,
And like light can flee,
But above all other things,
Spirit, I love thee—
Thou art love and life! Oh, come,
Make once more my heart thy home.

EVENING: PONTE AL MARE, PISA

I

THE sun is set; the swallows are asleep;
The bats are flitting fast in the grey air;
The slow soft toads out of damp corners creep,
And evening's breath, wandering here and there
Over the quivering surface of the stream,
Wakes not one ripple from its summer dream.

II

There is no dew on the dry grass to-night,
Nor damp within the shadow of the trees;
The wind is intermitting, dry, and light;
And in the inconstant motion of the breeze
The dust and straws are driven up and down,
And whirled about the pavement of the town.

III

Within the surface of the fleeting river
 The wrinkled image of the city lay,
 Immovably unquiet, and forever
 It trembles, but it never fades away;
 Go to the . . .
 You, being changed, will find it then as now.

IV

The chasm in which the sun has sunk is shut
 By darkest barriers of cinereous cloud,
 Like mountain over mountain huddled—but
 Growing and moving upwards in a crowd,
 And over it a space of watery blue,
 Which the keen evening star is shining through.

FRAGMENT ON KEATS

WHO DESIRED THAT ON HIS TOMB SHOULD BE INSCRIBED—

“ HERE lieth One whose name was writ on water.”
 But, ere the breath that could erase it blew,
 Death, in remorse for that fell slaughter,
 Death, the immortalising winter, flew
 Athwart the stream,—and time’s printless torrent grew
 A scroll of crystal, blazoning the name
 Of Adonais!

ADONAI

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS, AUTHOR
OF "ENDYMION," "HYPERION," ETC.

'Αστήρ πρὸν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐνὶ ζωοῖσιν Ἐφός·
νῦν δὲ θαυῶν λάμπεις Ἔσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις.—PLATO.

PREFACE

Φάρμακον ἤλθε, Βίων, ποτὶ σὸν στόμα, φάρμακον εἶδες.
πῶς τεν τοῦς χειλεσσι ποτέδραμε, κούκ ἐγλυκάνθη;
τὶς δέ βροτὸς τοσσοῦτον ἀνάμερος, ἢ κερδσαι τοι,
ἢ δοῦναι λαλέοντι τὸ φάρμακον; ἔκφυγεν φόδάν.

—MOSCHUS, ΕΡΙΤΑΡΗ. BION.

IT is my intention to subjoin to the London edition of this poem a criticism upon the claims of its lamented object to be classed among the writers of the highest genius who have adorned our age. My known repugnance to the narrow principles of taste on which several of his earlier compositions were modelled prove at least that I am an impartial judge. I consider the fragment of *Hyperion* as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years.

John Keats died at Rome of a consumption, in his twenty-fourth year, on the — of — 1821; and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius, and the massy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an open space

among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I have dedicated these unworthy verses was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful; and where cankerworms abound, what wonder if its young flower was blighted in the bud? The savage criticism on his *Endymion*, which appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued, and the succeeding acknowledgments from more candid critics of the true greatness of his powers were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted.

It may be well said that these wretched men know not what they do. They scatter their insults and their slanders without heed as to whether the poisoned shaft lights on a heart made callous by many blows or one like Keats's composed of more penetrable stuff. One of their associates is, to my knowledge, a most base and unprincipled calumniator. As to *Endymion*, was it a poem, whatever might be its defects, to be treated contemptuously by those who had celebrated, with various degrees of complacency and panegyric, *Paris*, and *Woman*, and a *Syrian Tale*, and Mrs. Lefanu, and Mr. Barrett, and Mr. Howard Payne, and a long list of the illustrious obscure? Are these the men who in their venal good nature presumed to draw a parallel between the Rev. Mr. Milman and Lord Byron? What gnat did they strain at here, after having swallowed all

those camels? Against what woman taken in adultery dares the foremost of these literary prostitutes to cast his opprobrious stone? Miserable man! you, one of the meanest, have wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse, that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers, but used none.

The circumstances of the closing scene of poor Keats's life were not made known to me until the *Elegy* was ready for the press. I am given to understand that the wound which his sensitive spirit had received from the criticism of *Endymion* was exasperated by the bitter sense of unrequited benefits; the poor fellow seems to have been hooted from the stage of life, no less by those on whom he had wasted the promise of his genius, than those on whom he had lavished his fortune and his care. He was accompanied to Rome and attended in his last illness by Mr. Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed, "almost risked his own life, and sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon his dying friend." Had I known these circumstances before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with the reward from "such stuff as dreams are made of." His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career—may the unextinguished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name!

ADONAISS

I

I WEEP for Adonais—he is dead!
Oh, weep for Adonais! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!
And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,
And teach them thine own sorrow, say: “ With me
Died Adonais; till the Future dares
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity! ”

II

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,
When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies
In darkness? where was lorn Urania
When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,
'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise
She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath,
Rekindled all the fading melodies,
With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,
He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of Death.

III

Oh, weep for Adonais—he is dead!
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep!
Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep,

Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;
For he is gone, where all things wise and fair
Descend;—oh, dream not that the amorous Deep
Will yet restore him to the vital air;
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

IV

Most musical of mourners, weep again!
Lament anew, Urania!—he died,
Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,
Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride,
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,
Trampled and mocked with many a loathèd rite
Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,
Into the gulf of death; but his clear Sprite
Yet reigns o'er earth; the third among the sons of light.

V

Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Not all to that bright station dared to climb;
And happier they their happiness who knew,
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time
In which suns perished; others more sublime,
Struck by the envious wrath of man or god,
Have sunk, extinct in their resplendent prime;
And some yet live, treading the thorny road,
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene
abode.

VI

But now, thy youngest, dearest one, has perished—
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,
And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew;
Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
The bloom, whose petals nipped before they blew
Died, on the promise of the fruit, is waste;
The broken lily lies—the storm is overpast.

VII

To that high Capital, where kingly Death
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
A grave among the eternal.—Come away!
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

VIII

He will awake no more, oh, never more!—
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace
The shadow of white Death, and at the door
Invisible Corruption waits to trace
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;
The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe

Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface
 So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law
 Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

IX

Oh, weep for Adonais!—The quick Dreams,
 The passion-wingèd Ministers of thought,
 Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams
 Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
 The love which was its music, wander not,—
 Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,
 But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn
 their lot
 Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,
 They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

X

And one with trembling hands clasps his cold head,
 And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries:
 “ Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead;
 See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,
 Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
 A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain.”
 Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!
 She knew not 'twas her own; as with no stain
 She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain.

XI

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
 Washed his light limbs as if embalming them

Another clipped her profuse locks, and threw
 The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
 Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem;
 Another in her wilful grief would break
 Her bow and wingèd reeds, as if to stem
 A greater loss with one which was more weak;
 And dull the barbèd fire against his frozen cheek.

XII

Another Splendour on his mouth alit,
 That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath
 Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,
 And pass into the panting heart beneath
 With lightning and with music: the damp death
 Quenched its caress upon his icy lips;
 And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
 Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips,
 It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to its eclipse.

XIII

And others came . . . Desires and Adorations,
 Wingèd Persuasions and veiled Destinies,
 Splendours, and Gloom, and glimmering Incarnations
 Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies;
 And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
 And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
 Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,
 Came in slow pomp;—the moving pomp might seem
 Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

XIV

All he had loved and moulded into thought,
From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,
Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,
Dimmed the aëreal eyes that kindle day;
Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
And the wild Winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

XV

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,
And will no more reply to winds or fountains,
Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray,
Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;
Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
Than those for whose disdain she pined away
Into a shadow of all sounds:—a drear
Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear.

XVI

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown,
For whom should she have waked the sullen year?
To Phoebus was not Hyacinth so dear

Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
 Thou, Adonais: wan they stand and sere
 Amid the faint companions of their youth,
 With dew all turned to tears; odour, to sighing ruth.

XVII

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale
 Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain;
 Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale
 Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain
 Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,
 Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,
 As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain
 Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,
 And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!

XVIII

Ah, woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
 But grief returns with the revolving year;
 The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;
 The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear;
 Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Season's bier;
 The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
 And build their mossy homes in field and brere;
 And the green lizard, and the golden snake,
 Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

XIX

Through wood and stream and field and hill and Ocean
 A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst

As it has ever done, with change and motion,
 From the great morning of the world when first
 God dawned on Chaos; in its stream immersed,
 The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light;
 All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst;
 Diffuse themselves; and spend in love's delight
 The beauty and the joy of their renewèd might.

XX

The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit tender,
 Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
 Like incarnations of the stars, when splendour
 Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death
 And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath;
 Nought we know, dies. Shall that alone which knows
 Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
 By sightless lightning?—the intense atom glows
 A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose.

XXI

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
 But for our grief, as if it had not been,
 And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!
 Whence are we, and why are we? of what scene
 The actors or spectators? Great and mean
 Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.
 As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
 Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
 Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to
 SORROW.

XXII

He will awake no more, oh, never more!

"Wake thou," cried Misery, "childless Mother, rise
Out of thy sleep, and slake in thy heart's core
A wound more fierce than his, with tears and sighs."
And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,
And all the Echoes whom their sister's song
Had held in holy silence, cried: "Arise!"

Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour sprung.

XXIII

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
Out of the East, and follows wild and drear
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear
So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania;
So saddened round her like an atmosphere
Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

XXIV

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,
And human hearts, which to her airy tread
Yielding not, wounded the invisible
Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell:
And barbèd tongues, and thoughts more sharp than
they,

Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

xxv

In the death-chamber for a moment Death,
Shamed by the presence of that living Might,
Blushed to annihilation, and the breath
Revisited those lips, and Life's pale light
Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight.
"Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,
As silent lightning leaves the starless night!
Leave me not!" cried Urania: her distress
Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her vain
caress.

xxvi

"Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
And in my heartless breast and burning brain
That word, that kiss, shall all thoughts else survive.
With food of saddest memory kept alive,
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
All that I am to be as thou now art!
But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart!

xxvii

"O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men

Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart
 Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?
 Defenceless as thou wert, oh, where was then
 Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear?
 Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
 Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,
 The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like deer.

XXVIII

“ The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
 The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead;
 The vultures to the conqueror's banner true
 Who feed where Desolation first has fed,
 And whose wings rain contagion;—how they fled,
 When, like Apollo, from his golden bow
 The Pythian of the age one arrow sped
 And smiled!—The spoilers tempt no second blow,
 They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.

XXIX

“ The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn.
 He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
 Is gathered into death without a dawn,
 And the immortal stars awake again;
 So is it in the world of living men:
 A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
 Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when
 It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light
 Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night.”

XXX

Thus ceased she: and the mountain shepherds came,
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent;
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
Over his living head like Heaven is bent,
An early but enduring monument,
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
And Love taught Grief to fall like music from his
tongue.

XXXI

Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,
A phantom among men; companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
Actaeon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

XXXII

A pardlike Spirit beautiful and swift—
A Love in desolation masked;—a Power
Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour;
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,

A breaking billow;—even whilst we speak
 Is it not broken? On the withering flower
 The killing sun smiles brightly: on a cheek
 The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may
 break.

XXXIII

His head was bound with pansies overblown,
 And faded violets, white, and pied and blue;
 And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
 Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew
 Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
 Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
 Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew
 He came the last, neglected and apart;
 A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.

XXXIV

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
 Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band
 Who in another's fate now wept his own,
 As in the accents of an unknown land
 He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned
 The Stranger's mien, and murmured: "Who art thou?"
 He answered not, but with a sudden hand
 Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,
 Which was like Cain's or Christ's—oh! that it should
 be so!

XXXV

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?
 Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?

What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,
In mockery of monumental stone,
The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the departed one,
Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs,
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

XXXVI

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh!
What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?
The nameless worm would now itself disown:
It felt, yet could escape, the magic tone
Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,
But what was howling in one breast alone,
Silent with expectation of the song,
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

XXXVII

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame!
Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,
Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!
But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
And ever at thy season be thou free
To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow:
Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee;
Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as now.

XXXVIII

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
Far from these carrion kites that scream below;
He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;
Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now.—
Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
Through time and change, unquenchably the same,
Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.

XXXIX

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
He hath awakened from the dream of life—
'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's knife
Invulnerable nothings.—*We* decay
Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
Convulse us and consume us day by day,
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

XL

He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again;
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
· He is secure, and now can never mourn

A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain;
 Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
 With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

XL^I

He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he;
 Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn,
 Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee
 The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
 Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
 Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,
 Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
 O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
 Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

XL^{II}

He is made one with Nature: there is heard
 His voice in all her music, from the moan
 Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;
 He is a presence to be felt and known
 In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
 Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
 Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
 Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
 Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

XL^{III}

He is a portion of the loveliness
 Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear
 His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
 Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there,

All new successions to the forms they wear;
 Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
 To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
 And bursting in its beauty and its might
 From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

XLIV

The splendours of the firmament of time
 May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;
 Like stars to their appointed height they climb,
 And death is a low mist which cannot blot
 The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
 Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
 And love and life contend in it, for what
 Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there
 And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

XLV

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
 Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,
 Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
 Rose pale,—his solemn agony had not
 Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought
 And as he fell and as he lived and loved
 Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
 Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved:
 Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved.

XLVI

And many more, whose names on Earth are dark,
 But whose transmitted effluence cannot die

So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
 Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
 "Thou art become as one of us," they cry,
 "It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
 Swung blind in unascended majesty,
 Silent alone amid an Heaven of Song.
 Assume thy wingèd throne, thou Vesper of our throng!"

XLVII

Who mourns far Adonais? Oh, come forth,
 Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.
 Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;
 As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
 Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
 Satiate the void circumference: then shrink
 Even to a point within our day and night;
 And keep thy heart light lest it make thee sink
 When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink.

XLVIII

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,
 Oh, not of him, but of our joy: 'tis nought
 That ages, empires, and religions there
 Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;
 For such as he can lend,—they borrow not
 Glory from those who made the world their prey;
 And he is gathered to the kings of thought
 Who waged contention with their time's decay,
 And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

XLIX

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,
 The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
 And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise,
 And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses dress
 The bones of Desolation's nakedness,
 Pass, till the spirit of the spot shall lead
 Thy footsteps to a slope of green access
 Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead
 A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread;

L

And grey walls moulder round, on which dull Time
 Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
 And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
 Pavilioning the dust of him who planned
 This refuge for his memory, doth stand
 Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,
 A field is spread, on which a newer band
 Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
 Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.

LI

Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet
 To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned
 Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,
 Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
 Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find

Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
 Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind
 Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
 What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

LII

The One remains, the many change and pass;
 Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
 Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
 Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
 Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,
 If thou wouldest be with that which thou dost seek!
 Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure sky,
 Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak
 The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

LIII

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?
 Thy hopes are gone before: from all things here
 They have departed; thou shouldst now depart!
 A light is passed from the revolving year,
 And man, and woman; and what still is dear
 Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
 The soft sky smiles,—the low wind whispers near:
 'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,
 No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

LIV

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
 That Beauty in which all things work and move,

That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
 Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
 Which through the web of being blindly wove
 By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
 Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
 The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me,
 Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

LV

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
 Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,
 Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
 Whose sails were never to the tempest given;
 The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!
 I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
 Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
 The soul of Adonais, like a star,
 Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

“WHEN THE LAMP IS SHATTERED”

I

WHEN the lamp is shattered
 The light in the dust lies dead—
 When the cloud is scattered
 The rainbow's glory is shed.

When the lute is broken,
 Sweet tones are remembered not;
 When the lips have spoken,
 Loved accents are soon forgot.

II

As music and splendour
 Survive not the lamp and the lute,
 The heart's echoes render
 No song when the spirit is mute:—
 No song but sad dirges,
 Like the wind through a ruined cell,
 Or the mournful surges
 That ring the dead seaman's knell.

III

When hearts have once mingled
 Love first leaves the well-built nest;
 The weak one is singled
 To endure what it once possessed.
 O Love! who bewailest
 The frailty of all things here,
 Why choose you the frailest
 For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

IV

Its passions will rock thee
 As the storms rock the ravens on high;
 Bright reason will mock thee,
 Like the sun from a wintry sky.

From thy nest every rafter
 Will rot, and thine eagle home
 Leave thee naked to laughter,
 When leaves fall and colds winds come.

LAONE'S SONG

(From *The Revolt of Islam*)

I

"Calm art thou as yon sunset! swift and strong
 As new-fledged Eagles, beautiful and young,
 That float among the blinding beams of morning;
 And underneath thy feet writhe Faith, and Folly,
 Custom, and Hell, and mortal Melancholy—
 Hark! the Earth starts to hear the mighty warning
 Of thy voice sublime and holy;
 Its free spirits here assembled,
 See thee, feel thee, know thee now,—
 To thy voice their hearts have trembled
 Like ten thousand clouds which flow
 With one wide wind as it flies!—
 Wisdom! thy irresistible children rise
 To hail thee, and the elements they chain
 And their own will, to swell the glory of thy train.

II

"O Spirit vast and deep as Night and Heaven!
 Mother and soul of all to which is given

The light of life, the loveliness of being,
 Lo! thou dost re-ascend the human heart,
 Thy throne of power, almighty as thou wert
 In dreams of Poets old grown pale by seeing
 The shade of thee:—now, millions start
 To feel thy lightnings through them burning:
 Nature, or God, or Love, or Pleasure,
 Or Sympathy the sad tears turning
 To mutual smiles, a drainless treasure,
 Descends amidst us;—Scorn, and Hate,
 Revenge and Selfishness are desolate—
 A hundred nations swear that there shall be
 Pity and Peace and Love, among the good and free!

III

“ Eldest of things, divine Equality!
 Wisdom and Love are but the slaves of thee,
 The Angels of thy sway, who pour around thee
 Treasures from all the cells of human thought,
 And from the Stars, and from the Ocean brought,
 And the last living heart whose beatings bound thee:
 The powerful and the wise had sought
 Thy coming, thou in light descending
 O'er the wide land which is thine own
 Like the Spring whose breath is blending
 All blasts of fragrance into one,
 Comest upon the paths of men!—
 Earth bares her general bosom to thy ken,
 And all her children here in glory meet
 To feed upon thy smiles, and clasp thy sacred feet.

IV

" My brethren, we are free! the plains and mountains,
The grey sea-shore, the forests and the fountains,
Are haunts of happiest dwellers;—man and woman,
Their common bondage burst, may freely borrow
From lawless love a solace for their sorrow;
For oft we still must weep, since we are human.

A stormy night's serenest morrow,
Whose showers are pity's gentle tears,
Whose clouds are smiles of those that die
Like infants without hopes or fears,
And whose beams are joys that lie
In blended hearts, now holds dominion;
The dawn of mind, which upwards on a pinion
Borne, swift as sunrise, far illumines space,
And clasps this barren world in its own bright embrace!

V

" My brethren, we are free! The fruits are glowing
Beneath the stars, and the night winds are flowing
O'er the ripe corn, the birds and beasts are dreaming—
Never again may blood of bird or beast
Stain with its venomous stream a human feast,
To the pure skies in accusation steaming;
Avenging poisons shall have ceased
To feed disease and fear and madness,
The dwellers of the earth and air
Shall throng around our steps in gladness
Seeking their food or refuge there.

Our toil from thought all glorious forms shall cull,
To make this Earth, our home, more beautiful,
And Science, and her sister Poesy,
Shall clothe in light the fields and cities of the free!

VI

"Victory, Victory to the prostrate nations!
Bear witness Night, and ye mute Constellations
Who gaze on us from your crystalline cars!"

Thoughts have gone forth whose powers can sleep
no more!

Victory! Victory! Earth's remotest shore,
Regions which groan beneath the Antarctic stars,

The green lands cradled in the roar
Of western waves, and wildernesses

Peopled and vast, which skirt the oceans
Where morning dyes her golden tresses,

Shall soon partake our high emotions:

Kings shall turn pale! Almighty Fear

The Fiend-God, when our charmèd name he hear,
Shall fade like shadow from his thousand fanes,

While Truth with Joy enthroned o'er his lost empire
reigns!"

SELECTIONS FROM "PROMETHEUS
UNBOUND"

The first part of the poem describes the torture of Prometheus. Mercury is sent to offer him freedom if he will repent and submit to Jupiter. He refuses and the torturing Furies fall upon him, whereupon his agony takes the form of a vision of all the world's suffering. The agony passes; Mother Earth summons gentle spirits to soothe his tortured body and spirit; but he declares "most vain all hope but love," and recalls the love of Asia his wife in happier days. The Second Act is full of the dreams of Asia, who goes to the cave of Demogorgon, who appears to typify the Primal Power, and from thence they are carried away by the Spirit of the Hour at which Jove will be cast down. In the Third Act Demogorgon reaches heaven and hurls the exulting tyrant down to the abyss. Prometheus, freed by Hercules, is united to Asia. The Fourth Act is an epilogue in which "the poet gives further scope to his imagination. . . . Maternal Earth, the mighty parent, is superseded by the Spirit of the Earth, the guide of our planet through the realms of sky; while his fair and weaker companion and attendant, the Spirit of the Moon, receives bliss from the annihilation of Evil in the superior sphere."

THE FIRST ACT

SCENE.—*A Ravine of Icy Rocks in the Indian Caucasus.*

PROMETHEUS is discovered bound to the Precipice.

PANTHEA and IONE are seated at his feet. Time, night. During the Scene, morning slowly breaks.

Prometheus. Monarch of Gods and Daemons, and all Spirits

But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds
Which thou and I alone of living things

Behold with sleepless eyes! regard this Earth
Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou
Requistest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,
And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,
With fear and self-contempt and barren hope.
Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,
Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn,
O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.
Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,
And moments aye divided by keen pangs
Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,
Scorn and despair,—these are mine empire,
More glorious far than that which thou surveyest
From thine unenvied throne, O Mighty God!
Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame
Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here
Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain,
Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,
Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life.
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure.
I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt?
I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,
Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm,
Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,
Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears
Of their moon-freezing crystals, the bright chains

Eat with their burning cold into my bones.
Heaven's wingèd hound, polluting from thy lips
His beak in poison not his own, tears up
My heart; and shapeless sights come wandering by,
The ghastly people of the realm of dream,
Mocking me: and the Earthquake-fiends are charged
To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds
When the rocks split and close again behind:
While from their loud abysses howling throng
The genii of the storm, urging the rage
Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail.
And yet to me welcome is day and night,
Whether one breaks the hoar frost of the morn,
Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs
The leaden-coloured east; for then they lead
The wingless, crawling hours, one among whom
—As some dark Priest hales the reluctant victim—
Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood
From these pale feet, which then might trample thee
If they disdained not such a prostrate slave.
Disdain! Ah no! I pity thee. What ruin
Will hunt thee undefended through wide Heaven!
How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror,
Gape like a hell within! I speak in grief,
Not exultation, for I hate no more,
As then ere misery made me wise. The curse
Once breathed on thee I would recall. Ye Mountains,
Whose many-voicèd Echoes, through the mist
Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell!
Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost,
Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept

Shuddering through India! Thou serenest Air,
 Through which the Sun walks burning without beams!
 And ye swift Whirlwinds, who on poised wings
 Hung mute and moveless o'er yon hushed abyss,
 As thunder, louder than your own, made rock
 The orbèd world! If then my words had power,
 Though I am changed so that aught evil wish
 Is dead within; although no memory be
 Of what is hate, let them not lose it now!
 What was that curse? for ye all heard me speak.

First Voice (from the Mountains)

Thrice three hundred thousand years
 O'er the Earthquake's couch we stood:
 Oft, as men convulsed with fears,
 We trembled in our multitude.

Second Voice (from the Springs)

Thunderbolts had parched our water,
 We had been stained with bitter blood,
 And had run mute, 'mid shrieks of slaughter,
 Thro' a city and a solitude.

Third Voice (from the Air)

I had clothed, since Earth uprose,
 Its wastes in colours not their own,
 And oft had my serene repose
 Been cloven by many a rending groan.

Fourth Voice (from the Whirlwinds)

We had soared beneath these mountains
Unresting ages; nor had thunder,
Nor yon volcano's flaming fountains,
Nor any power above or under
Ever made us mute with wonder.

First Voice

But never bowed our snowy crest
As at the voice of thine unrest.

Second Voice

Never such a sound before
To the Indian waves we bore.
A pilot asleep on the howling sea
Leaped up from the deck in agony,
And heard, and cried, "Ah, woe is me!"
And died as mad as the wild waves be.

Third Voice

By such dread words from Earth to Heaven
My still realm was never riven:
When its wound was closed, there stood
Darkness o'er the day like blood.

Fourth Voice

And we shrank back: for dreams of ruin
To frozen caves our flight pursuing
Made us keep silence—thus—and thus—
Though silence is as hell to us.

The Earth. The tongueless Caverns of the craggy hills
Cried, " Misery! " then: the hollow Heaven replied,
" Misery! " And the Ocean's purple waves,
Climbing the land, howled to the lashing winds,
And the pale nations heard it, " Misery! "

Prometheus. I hear a sound of voices: not the voice
Which I gave forth. Mother, thy sons and thou
Scorn him, without whose all-enduring will
Beneath the fierce omnipotence of Jove,
Both they and thou had vanished, like thin mist
Unrolled on the morning wind. Know ye not me,
The Titan? He who made his agony
The barrier to your else all-conquering foe?
Oh, rock-embosomed lawns, and snow-fed streams,
Now seen athwart frore vapours, deep below,
Through whose o'ershadowing woods I wandered once
With Asia, drinking life from her loved eyes;
Why scorns the spirit which informs ye, now
To commune with me? me alone, who checked,
As one who checks a fiend-drawn charioteer,
The falsehood and the force of him who reigns
Supreme, and with the groans of pining slaves
Fills your dim glens and liquid wildernesses:
Why answer ye not, still? Brethren!

The Earth.

They dare not.

Prometheus. Who dares? for I would hear that curse
again.

Ha, what an awful whisper rises up!

'Tis scarce like sound: it tingles through the frame

As lightning tingles, hovering ere it strike.

Speak, Spirit! from thine inorganic voice

I only know that thou art moving near,
And love. How cursed I him?

The Earth. How canst thou hear
Who knowest not the language of the dead?

Prometheus. Thou art a living spirit; speak as they.

The Earth. I dare not speak like life, lest Heaven's
 fell King

Should hear, and link me to some wheel of pain
More torturing than the one whereon I roll.
Subtle thou art and good, and though the Gods
Hear not this voice, yet thou art more than God,
Being wise and kind: earnestly hearken now.

Prometheus. Obscurely through my brain, like shadows
 dim,

Sweep awful thoughts, rapid and thick. I feel
Faint, like one mingled in entwining love;
Yet 'tis not pleasure.

The Earth. No, thou canst not hear:
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known
Only to those who die.

Prometheus. And what art thou,
O melancholy Voice?

The Earth. I am the Earth,
Thy mother; she within whose stony veins,
To the last fibre of the loftiest tree
Whose thin leaves trembled in the frozen air,
Joy ran, as blood within a living frame,
When thou didst from her bosom, like a cloud
Of glory, arise, a spirit of keen joy!
And at thy voice her pining sons uplifted
Their prostrate brows from the polluting dust,

And our almighty Tyrant with fierce dread
Grew pale, until his thunder chained thee here.
Then, see those million worlds which burn and roll
Around us: their inhabitants beheld
My spherèd light wane in wide Heaven; the sea
Was lifted by strange tempest, and new fire
From earthquake-rifted mountains of bright snow
Shook its portentous hair beneath Heaven's frown;
Lightning and Inundation vexed the plains;
Blue thistles bloomed in cities; foodless toads
Within voluptuous chambers panting crawled:
When Plague had fallen on man, and beast, and worm,
And Famine; and black blight on herb and tree;
And in the corn, and vines, and meadow-grass,
Teemed ineradicable poisonous weeds
Draining their growth, for my wan breast was dry
With grief; and the thin air, my breath, was stained
With the contagion of a mother's hate
Breathed on her child's destroyer; ay, I heard
Thy curse, the which, if thou rememberest not,
Yet my innumerable seas and streams,
Mountains and caves, and winds, and yon wide air,
And the inarticulate people of the dead,
Preserve a treasured spell. We meditate
In secret joy and hope those dreadful words,
But dare not speak them.

Prometheus Venerable mother!
All else who live and suffer take from thee
Some comfort; flowers, and fruits, and happy sounds,
And love, though fleeting; these may not be mine.
But mine own words, I pray, deny me not.

The Earth. They shall be told. Ere Babylon was
dust,

The Magus Zoroaster, my dead child,
Met his own image walking in the garden.
That apparition, sole of men, he saw.
For know there are two worlds of life and death:
One that which thou beholdest; but the other
Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit
The shadows of all forms that think and live
Till death unite them and they part no more;
Dreams and the light imaginings of men
And all that faith creates or love desires,
Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous shapes.
There thou art, and dost hang, a writhing shade,
'Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains; all the gods
Are there, and all the powers of nameless worlds,
Vast, sceptred phantoms; heroes, men, and beasts;
And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom;
And he, the supreme Tyrant, on his throne
Of burning gold. Son, one of these shall utter
The curse which all remember. Call at will
Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter,
Hades or Typhon, or what mightier Gods
From all-prolific Evil, since thy ruin
Have sprung, and trampled on my prostrate sons.
Ask, and they must reply: so the revenge
Of the Supreme may sweep through vacant shades,
As rainy wind through the abandoned gate
Of a fallen palace.

Prometheus. Mother, let not aught
Of that which may be evil, pass again

My lips, or those of aught resembling me.
Phantasm of Jupiter, arise, appear!

Ione

My wings are folded o'er mine ears:
My wings are crossèd o'er mine eyes:
Yet through their silver shade appears,
And through their lulling plumes arise,
A Shape, a throng of sounds;
May it be no ill to thee
O thou of many wounds!
Near whom, for our sweet sister's sake,
Ever thus we watch and wake.

Panthea

The sound is of whirlwind underground,
Earthquake, and fire, and mountains cloven;
The shape is awful like the sound,
Clothed in dark purple, star-inwoven.
A sceptre of pale gold
To stay steps proud, o'er the slow cloud
His veinèd hand doth hold.
Cruel he looks, but calm and strong,
Like one who does, not suffers wrong.

Phantasm of Jupiter. Why have the secret powers of
this strange world

Driven me, a frail and empty phantom, hither
On direst storms? What unaccustomed sounds
Are hovering on my lips, unlike the voice
With which our pallid race hold ghastly talk
In darkness? And, proud sufferer, who art thou?

Prometheus. Tremendous Image, as thou art must be
He whom thou shadowest forth. I am his foe,
The Titan. Speak the words which I would hear,
Although no thought inform thine empty voice.

The Earth. Listen! And though your echoes must be
mute,
Grey mountains, and old woods, and haunted springs,
Prophetic caves, and isle-surrounding streams,
Rejoice to hear what yet ye cannot speak.

Phantasm. A spirit seizes me and speaks within:
It tears me as fire tears a thunder-cloud.

Panthea. See, how he lifts his mighty looks, the Heaven
Darkens above.

Ione. He speaks! O shelter me!

Prometheus. I see the curse on gestures proud and
cold,
And looks of firm defiance, and calm hate,
And such despair as mocks itself with smiles,
Written as on a scroll: yet speak! Oh, speak!

Phantasm

Fiend, I defy thee! with a calm, fixed mind,

All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do;

Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Human-kind,

One only being shalt thou not subdue.

Rain then thy plagues upon me here,

Ghastly disease, and frenzying fear;

And let alternate frost and fire

Eat into me, and be thine ire

Lightning, and cutting hail, and legioned forms

Of furies, driving by upon the wounding storms.

Ay, do thy worst. Thou art omnipotent.

O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,
And my own will. Be thy swift mischiefs sent
To blast mankind, from yon ethereal tower.

Let thy malignant spirit move

In darkness over those I love:

On me and mine I imprecate

The utmost torture of thy hate;

And thus devote to sleepless agony

This undeclining head, while thou must reign on high.

But thou, who art the God and Lord: O, thou,

Who fillest with thy soul this world of woe,

To whom all things of Earth and Heaven do bow

In fear and worship: all-prevailing foe!

I curse thee! let a sufferer's curse

Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse;

Till thine Infinity shall be

A robe of envenomed agony;

And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain,

To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain.

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this Curse,

Ill deeds, then be thou damned, beholding good;

Both infinite as is the universe,

And thou, and thy self-torturing solitude.

An awful image of calm power

Though now thou sittest, let the hour

Come, when thou must appear to be

That which thou art internally;

And after many a false and fruitless crime
 Scorn track thy lagging fall through boundless space
 and time.

Prometheus. Were these my words, O Parent?

The Earth. They were thine.

Prometheus. It doth repent me: words are quick and
 vain;

Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine.

I wish no living thing to suffer pain.

The Earth

Misery, Oh, misery to me,

That Jove at length should vanquish thee.

Wail, howl aloud, Land and Sea,

The Earth's rent heart shall answer thee.

Howl, Spirits of the living and the dead,

Your refuge, your defence lies fallen and vanquishèd.

First Echo

Lies fallen and vanquishèd!

Second Echo

Fallen and vanquishèd!

Ione

Fear not: 'tis but some passing spasm,

The Titan is unvanquished still.

But see, where through the azure chasm

Of yon forked and snowy hill

Trampling the slant winds on high
 With golden-sandalled feet, that glow
 Under plumes of purple dye,
 Like rose-ensanguined ivory,
 A Shape comes now,
 Stretching on high from his right hand
 A serpent-cinctured wand.

Panthea. 'Tis Jove's world-wandering herald, Mercury.

Ione

And who are those with hydra tresses
 And iron wings that climb the wind,
 Whom the frowning God represses
 Like vapours steaming up behind,
 Clanging loud, an endless crowd—

Panthea

These are Jove's tempest-walking hounds,
 Whom he gluts with groans and blood,
 When charioted on sulphurous cloud
 He bursts Heaven's bounds.

Ione

Are they now led, from the thin dead
 On new pangs to be fed?

Panthea

The Titan looks as ever, firm, not proud.

First Fury. Ha! I scent life!

Second Fury. Let me but look into his eyes!

Third Fury. The hope of torturing him smells like
a heap
Of corpses, to a death-bird after battle.

First Fury. Darest thou delay, O Herald! take cheer,
Hounds
Of Hell: what if the Son of Maia soon
Should make us food and sport—who can please long
The Omnipotent?

Mercury. Back to your towers of iron,
And gnash, beside the streams of fire and wail,
Your foodless teeth. Geryon, arise! and Gorgon,
Chimaera, and thou Sphinx, subtlest of fiends
Who ministered to Thebes Heaven's poisoned wine,
Unnatural love, and more unnatural hate:
These shall perform your task.

First Fury. Oh, mercy! mercy!
We die with our desire: drive us not back!

Mercury. Crouch then in silence.
Awful sufferer!
To thee unwilling, most unwillingly
I come, by the great Father's will driven down,
To execute a doom of new revenge.
Alas! I pity thee, and hate myself
That I can do no more: aye from thy sight
Returning, for a season, Heaven seems Hell,
So thy worn form pursues me night and day,
Smiling reproach. Wise art thou, firm and good,
But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in strife
Against the Omnipotent; as yon clear lamps
That measure and divide the weary years
From which there is no refuge, long have taught

And long must teach. Even now thy Torturer arms
With the strange might of unimagined pains
The powers who scheme slow agonies in Hell,
And my commission is to lead them here,
Or what more subtle, foul or savage fiends
People the Abyss, and leave them to their task.
Be it not so! there is a secret known
To thee, and to none else of living things,
Which may transfer the sceptre of wide Heaven,
The fear of which perplexes the Supreme:
Clothe it in words, and bid it clasp his throne
In intercession; bend thy soul in prayer,
And like a suppliant in some gorgeous fane,
Let the will kneel within thy haughty heart:
For benefits and meek submission tame
The fiercest and the mightiest.

Prometheus.

Evil minds

Change good to their own nature. I gave all
He has; and in return he chains me here
Years, ages, night and day: whether the Sun
Split my parched skin, or in the moony night
The crystal-wingèd snow cling round my hair:
Whilst my belovèd race is trampled down
By his thought-executing ministers.
Such is the tyrant's recompense: 'tis just:
He who is evil can receive no good;
And for a world bestowed, or a friend lost,
He can feel hate, fear, shame; not gratitude:
He but requites me for his own misdeed.
Kindness to such is keen reproach, which breaks
With bitter stings the light sleep of Revenge.

Submission, thou dost know I cannot try:
For what submission but that fatal word,
The death-seal of mankind's captivity,
Like the Sicilian's hair-suspended sword,
Which trembles o'er his crown, would he accept,
Or could I yield? Which yet I will not yield.
Let others flatter Crime, where it sits throned
In brief Omnipotence: secure are they:
For Justice, when triumphant, will weep down
Pity, not punishment, on her own wrongs,
Too much avenged by those who err. I wait,
Enduring thus, the retributive hour
Which since we spake is even nearer now.
But hark, the hell-hounds clamour: fear delay:
Behold! Heaven lowers under thy Father's frown.

Mercury. Oh, that we might be spared: I to inflict
And thou to suffer! Once more answer me:
Thou knowest not the period of Jove's power?

Prometheus. I know but this, that it must come.

Mercury. Alas!

Thou canst not count thy years to come of pain?

Prometheus. They last while Jove must reign: nor
more, nor less

Do I desire or fear.

Mercury. Yet pause, and plunge
Into Eternity, where recorded time,
Even all that we imagine, age on age,
Seems but a point, and the reluctant mind
Flags wearily in its unending flight,
Till it sink, dizzy, blind, lost, shelterless;
Perchance it has not numbered the slow years

Which thou must spend in torture, unreproved?

Prometheus. Perchance no thought can count them,
yet they pass.

Mercury. If thou might'st dwell among the Gods the
while

Lapped in voluptuous joy?

Prometheus. I would not quit

This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains.

Mercury. Alas! I wonder at, yet pity thee.

Prometheus. Pity the self-despising slaves of Heaven,
Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene,
As light in the sun, throned: how vain is talk!
Call up the fiends.

Ione. O, sister, look! White fire
Has cloven to the roots yon huge snow-loaded cedar;
How fearfully God's thunder howls behind!

Mercury. I must obey his words and thine: alas!
Most heavily remorse hangs at my heart!

Panthea. See where the child of Heaven, with wingèd
feet,

Runs down the slanted sunlight of the dawn.

Ione. Dear sister, close thy plumes over thine eyes
Lest thou behold and die: they come: they come
Blackening the birth of day with countless wings,
And hollow underneath, like death.

First Fury. Prometheus!

Second Fury. Immortal Titan!

Third Fury. Champion of Heaven's slaves!

Prometheus. He whom some dreadful voice invokes is
here,

Prometheus, the chained Titan. Horrible forms,

What and who are ye? Never yet there came
 Phantasms so foul through monster-teeming Hell
 From the all-miscreative brain of Jove;
 Whilst I behold such execrable shapes,
 Methinks I grow like what I contemplate,
 And laugh and stare in loathsome sympathy.

First Fury. We are the ministers of pain, and fear,
 And disappointment, and mistrust, and hate,
 And clinging crime; and as lean dogs pursue
 Through wood and lake some struck and sobbing fawn,
 We track all things that weep, and bleed, and live,
 When the great King betrays them to our will.

Prometheus. Oh! many fearful natures in one name,
 I know ye; and these lakes and echoes know
 The darkness and the clangour of your wings.
 But why more hideous than your loathèd selves
 Gather ye up in legions from the deep?

Second Fury. We knew not that: Sisters, rejoice,
 rejoice!

Prometheus. Can aught exult in its deformity?

Second Fury. The beauty of delight makes lovers glad,
 Gazing on one another: so are we.
 As from the rose which the pale priestess kneels
 To gather for her festal crown of flowers
 The aërial crimson falls, flushing her cheek,
 So from our victim's destined agony
 The shade which is our form invests us round,
 Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.

Prometheus. I laugh your power, and his who sent you
 here,
 To lowest scorn. Pour forth the cup of pain.

First Fury. Thou thinkest we will rend thee bone from bone,

And nerve from nerve, working like fire within?

Prometheus. Pain is my element, as hate is thine; Ye rend me now: I care not.

Second Fury. Dost imagine We will but laugh into thy lidless eyes?

Prometheus. I weigh not what ye do, but what ye suffer, Being evil. Cruel was the power which called You, or aught else so wretched, into light.

Third Fury. Thou think'st we will live through thee, one by one,

Like animal life, and though we can obscure not The soul which burns within, that we will dwell Beside it, like a vain loud multitude

Vexing the self-content of wisest men:

That we will be dread thought beneath thy brain, And foul desire round thine astonished heart, And blood within thy labyrinthine veins Crawling like agony?

Prometheus. Why, ye are thus now; Yet am I king over myself, and rule The torturing and conflicting throngs within, As Joves rules you when Hell grows mutinous.

Chorus of Furies

From the ends of the earth, from the ends of the earth, Where the night has its grave, and the morning its birth, Come, come, come!

Oh, ye who shake hills with the scream of your mirth, When cities sink howling in ruin; and ye

Who with wingless footsteps trample the sea,
And close upon Shipwreck and Famine's track,
Sit chattering with joy on the foodless wreck;

Come, come, come!

Leave the bed, low, cold, and red,
Strewed beneath a nation dead;
Leave the hatred, as in ashes

Fire is left for future burning:
It will burst in bloodier flashes

When ye stir it, soon returning:
Leave the self-contempt implanted
In young spirits, sense-enchanted,
Misery's yet unkindled fuel:
Leave Hell's secrets half uncharted
To the maniac dreamer; cruel
More than ye can be with hate

Is he with fear.

Come, come, come!

We are steaming up from Hell's wide gate
And we burthen the blasts of the atmosphere,
But vainly we toil till ye come here.

Ione. Sister, I hear the thunder of new wings.

Panthea. These solid mountains quiver with the sound
Even as the tremulous air: their shadows make
The space within my plumes more black than night.

First Fury

Your call was as a wingèd car
Driven on whirlwinds fast and far;
It rapt us from red gulphs of war.

Second Fury

From wide cities, famine-wasted;

Third Fury

Groans half heard, and blood untasted;

Fourth Fury

Kingly conclaves stern and cold,
Where blood with gold is bought and sold;

Fifth Fury

From the furnace, white and hot,
In which—

A Fury

Speak not: whisper not:
I know all that ye would tell,
But to speak might break the spell
Which must bend the Invincible,
The stern of thought;
He yet defies the deepest power of Hell.

A Fury
Tear the veil!*Another Fury*

It is torn.

Chorus

The pale stars of the morn
Shine on a misery, dire to be borne.

Dost thou faint, mighty Titan? We laugh thee to scorn.
 Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken'dst
 for man?

Then was kindled within him a thirst which outran
 Those perishing waters; a thirst of fierce fever,
 Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him for ever,

 One came forth of gentle worth
 Smiling on the sanguine earth;
 His words outlived him, like swift poison
 Withering up truth, peace, and pity.

Look! where round the wide horizon

 Many a million-peopled city
 Vomits smoke in the bright air.

Hark that outcry of despair!

'Tis his mild and gentle ghost
 Wailing for the faith he kindled:

Look again, the flames almost

 To a glow-worm's lamp have dwindled:
 The survivors round the embers

Gather in dread.

Joy, joy, joy!

Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers,
 And the future is dark, and the present is spread
 Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head.

Semichorus I

Drops of bloody agony flow
 From his white and quivering brow.
 Grant a little respite now:
 See a disenchanted nation
 Springs like day from desolation;

To Truth its state is dedicate,
 And Freedom leads it forth, her mate;
 A legioned band of linked brothers
 Whom Love calls children—

Semichorus II

'Tis another's:

See how kindred murder kin:
 'Tis the vintage-time for death and sin:
 Blood, like new wine, bubbles within:
 Till Despair smothers
 The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win.

[*All the FURIES vanish, except one.*

Ione. Hark, sister! what a low yet dreadful groan
 Quite unsuppressed is tearing up the heart
 Of the good Titan, as storms tear the deep,
 And beasts hear the sea moan in inland caves.
 Darest thou observe how the fiends torture him?

Panthea. Alas! I looked forth twice, but will no more.

Ione. What didst thou see?

Panthea. A woeful sight: a youth
 With patient looks nailed to a crucifix.

Ione. What next?

Panthea. The heaven around, the earth below
 Was peopled with thick shapes of human death,
 All horrible, and wrought by human hands,
 And some appeared the work of human hearts,
 For men were slowly killed by frowns and smiles:
 And other sights too foul to speak and live
 Were wandering by. Let us not tempt worse fear
 By looking forth: those groans are grief enough.

Fury. Behold an emblem: those who do endure
Deep wrongs for man, and scorn, and chains; but heap
Thousandfold torment on themselves and him.

Prometheus. Remit the anguish of that lighted stare;
Close those wan lips; let that thorn-wounded brow
Stream not with blood: it mingles with thy tears!
Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death,
So thy sick throes shake not that crucifix,
So those pale fingers play not with thy gore.
O, horrible! Thy name I will not speak,
It hath become a curse. I see, I see
The wise, the mild, the lofty, and the just,
Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee,
Some hunted by foul lies from their heart's home,
An early-chosen, late-lamented home;
As hooded ounces cling to the driven hind;
Some linked to corpses in unwholesome cells:
Some—hear I not the multitude laugh loud?—
Impaled in lingering fire: and mighty realms
Float by my feet, like sea-uprooted isles,
Whose sons are kneaded down in common blood
By the red light of their own burning homes.

Fury. Blood thou canst see, and fire; and canst hear
groans;
Worse things, unheard, unseen, remain behind.

Prometheus. Worse?.

Fury. In each human heart terror survives
The ruin it has gorged: the loftiest fear
All that they would disdain to think were true:
Hypocrisy and custom make their minds
The fanes of many a worship, now outworn.

They dare not devise good for man's estate,
 And yet they know not that they do not dare.
 The good want power, but to weep barren tears.
 The powerful goodness want: worse need for them.
 The wise want love: and those who love want wisdom;
 And all best things are thus confused to ill.
 Many are strong and rich, and would be just,
 But live among their suffering fellow-men
 As if none felt: they know not what they do.

Prometheus. Thy words are like a cloud of wingèd snakes;

And yet I pity those they torture not.

Fury. Thou pitiest them? I speak no more! [*Vanishes.*

Prometheus. Ah woe!

Ah woe! Alas! pain, pain ever, for ever!
 I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear
 Thy works within my woe-illuminèd mind,
 Thou subtle tyrant! Peace is in the grave.
 The grave hides all things beautiful and good:
 I am a God and cannot find it there,
 Nor would I seek it: for, though dread revenge,
 This is defeat, fierce king, not victory.
 The sights with which thou torturèst gird my soul
 With new endurance, till the hour arrives
 When they shall be no types of things which are.

Panthea. Alas! what sawest thou more?

Prometheus. There are two woes:
 To speak, and to behold; thou spare me one.
 Names are there, Nature's sacred watchwords, they
 Were borne aloft in bright emblazonry;
 The nations thronged around, and cried aloud,

As with one voice, Truth, liberty, and love!
 Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven
 Among them: there was strife, deceit, and fear:
 Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil.
 This was the shadow of the truth I saw.

The Earth. I felt thy torture, son: with such mixed joy
 As pain and virtue give. To cheer thy state
 I bid ascend those subtle and fair spirits,
 Whose homes are the dim caves of human thought,
 And who inhabit, as birds wing the wind,
 Its world-surrounding ether: they behold
 Beyond that twilight realm, as in a glass,
 The future: may they speak comfort to thee!

Panthea. Look, sister, where a troop of spirits gather,
 Like flocks of clouds in spring's delightful weather,
 Thronging in the blue air!

Ione. And see! more come,
 Like fountain-vapours when the winds are dumb,
 That climb up the ravine in scattered lines.
 And, hark! Is it the music of the pines?
 Is it the lake? Is it the waterfall?

Panthea. 'Tis something sadder, sweeter far than all.

Chorus of Spirits

From unremembered ages we
 Gentle guides and guardians be
 Of heaven-oppressed mortality;
 And we breathe, and sicken not,
 The atmosphere of human thought;
 Be it dim, and dank, and grey,
 Like a storm-extinguished day,

Travelled o'er by dying gleams;
Be it bright as all between
Cloudless skies and windless streams,
Silent, liquid, and serene;
As the birds within the wind,
As the fish within the wave,
As the thoughts of man's own mind
Float through all above the grave;
We make there our liquid lair,
Voyaging cloudlike and unspent
Through the boundless element:
Thence we bear the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee!

One. More yet come, one by one: the air around them
Looks radiant as the air around a star.

First Spirit

On a battle-trumpet's blast
I fled hither, fast, fast, fast,
'Mid the darkness upward cast.
From the dust of creeds outworn,
From the tyrant's banner torn,
Gathering round me, onward borne,
There was mingled many a cry—
Freedom! Hope! Death! Victory!
Till they faded through the sky!
And one sound, above, around,
One sound beneath, around, above,
Was moving; 'twas the soul of Love;

'Twas the hope, the prophecy,
Which begins and ends in thee.

Second Spirit

A rainbow's arch stood on the sea,
Which rocked beneath, immovably;
And the triumphant storm did flee,
Like a conqueror, swift and proud,
Between, with many a captive cloud,
A shapeless, dark and rapid crowd,
Each by lightning riven in half:
I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh:
Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff
And spread beneath a hell of death
O'er the white waters. I alit
On a great ship lightning-split,
And speeded hither on the sigh
Of one who gave an enemy
His plank, then plunged aside to die.

Third Spirit

I sate beside a sage's bed,
And a lamp was burning red
Near the book where he had fed,
When a dream with plumes of flame,
To his pillow hovering came,
And I knew it was the same
Which had kindled long ago
Pity, eloquence, and woe;
And the world awhile below

Wore the shade, its lustre made.
It has borne me here as fleet
As Desire's lightning feet:
I must ride it back ere morrow,
Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

Fourth Spirit

On a poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept;
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
But feeds on the aërial kisses
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illume
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see, what things they be:
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality!
One of these awakened me,
And I sped to succour thee.

Ione

Behold'st thou not two shapes from the east and west
Come, as two doves to one belovèd nest,
Twin nurslings of the all-sustaining air,
On swift still wings glide down the atmosphere?
And, hark! their sweet, sad voices! 'tis despair
Mingled with love and then dissolved in sound.

Panthea. Canst thou speak, sister? all my words are drowned.

Ione. Their beauty gives me voice. See how they float

On their sustaining wings of skiey grain,
Orange and azure deepening into gold:
Their soft smiles light the air like a star's fire.

Chorus of Spirits

Hast thou beheld the form of Love?

Fifth Spirit

As over wide dominions
I sped, like some swift cloud that wings the wide air's
wildernesses,
That planet-crested shape swept by on lightning-braided
pinions,
Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial
tresses:
His footsteps paved the world with light; but as I passed
'twas fading,
And hollow Ruin yawned behind: great sages bound
in madness,
And headless patriots, and pale youths who perished,
unupbraiding,
Gleamed in the night. I wandered o'er, till thou, O
King of sadness,
Turned by thy smile the worst I saw to recollected
gladness.

Sixth Spirit

Ah, sister! Desolation is a delicate thing:
 It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air,
 But treads with lulling footstep, and fans with silent wing
 The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and
 gentlest bear; . . .
 Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning plumes above
 And the music-stirring motion of its soft and busy feet,
 Dream visions of aërial joy, and call the monster, Love,
 And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as he whom
 now we greet.

Chorus

Though Ruin now Love's shadow be,
 Following him, destroyingly,
 On Death's white and wingèd steed,
 Which the fleetest cannot flee,
 Trampling down both flower and weed,
 Man and beast, and foul and fair,
 Like a tempest through the air;
 Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,
 Woundless though in heart or limb.

Prometheus. Spirits! how know ye this shall be?

Chorus

In the atmosphere we breathe,
 As buds grow red when the snow-storms flee,
 From Spring gathering up beneath,
 Whose mild winds shake the elder brake,
 And the wandering herdsmen know
 That the white-thorn soon will blow:

Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace,
 When they struggle to increase,
 Are to us as soft winds be
 To shepherd boys, the prophecy
 Which begins and ends in thee.

Ione. Where are the Spirits fled?

Panthea. Only a sense

Remains of them, like the omnipotence
 Of music, when the inspired voice and lute
 Languish, ere yet the responses are mute,
 Which through the deep and labyrinthine soul,
 Like echoes through long caverns, wind and roll.

Prometheus. How fair these air-born shapes! and yet
 I feel

Most vain all hope but love; and thou art far,
 Asia! who, when my being overflowed,
 Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine
 Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.
 All things are still: alas! how heavily
 This quiet morning weighs upon my heart;
 Though I should dream I could even sleep with grief
 If slumber were denied not. I would fain
 Be what it is my destiny to be,
 The saviour and the strength of suffering man,
 Or sink into the original gulph of things:
 There is no agony, and no solace left;
 Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more.

Panthea. Hast thou forgotten one who watches thee
 The cold dark night, and never sleeps but when
 The shadow of thy spirit falls on her?

Prometheus. I said all hope was vain but love: thou lovest.

Panthea. Deeply in truth; but the eastern star looks white,

And Asia waits in that far Indian vale,
The scene of her sad exile; rugged once
And desolate and frozen, like this ravine;
But now invested with fair flowers and herbs,
And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow
Among the woods and waters, from the ether
Of her transforming presence, which would fade
If it were mingled not with thine. Farewell!

End of the First Act.

“THE EARTH ONE BROTHERHOOD”

First Faun. Canst thou imagine where those spirits live

Which make such delicate music in the woods?
We haunt within the least frequented caves
And closest coverts, and we know these wilds,
Yet never meet them, though we hear them oft:
Where may they hide themselves?

Second Faun. 'Tis hard to tell.

I have heard those more skilled in spirits say,
The bubbles, which the enchantment of the sun
Sucks from the pale faint water-flowers that pave
The oozy bottom of clear lakes and pools,

Are the pavilions where such dwell and float
 Under the green and golden atmosphere
 Which noontide kindles through the woven leaves;
 And when these burst, and the thin fiery air,
 The which they breathed within those lucent domes,
 Ascends to flow like meteors through the night,
 They ride on them, and rein their headlong speed,
 And bow their burning crests, and glide in fire
 Under the waters of the earth again.

First Faun. If such live thus, have others other lives,
 Under pink blossoms or within the bells
 Of meadow flowers, or folded violets deep,
 Or on their dying odours, when they die,
 Or in the sunlight of the spherèd dew?

Second Faun. Ay, many more which we may well
 divine.

But, should we stay to speak, noontide would come,
 And thwart Silenus find his goats undrawn,
 And grudge to sing those wise and lovely songs
 Of Fate, and Chance, and God, and Chaos old,
 And Love, and the chained Titan's woful doom,
 And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth
 One brotherhood: delightful strains which cheer
 Our solitary twilights, and which charm
 To silence the unenvying nightingales.

ASIA'S INVOCATION TO EARTH

How glorious art thou, Earth! And if thou be
 The shadow of some spirit lovelier still,
 Though evil stain its work, and it should be

Like its creation, weak yet beautiful,
I could fall down and worship that and thee.
Even now my heart adoreth: Wonderful!
Look, sister, ere the vapour dim thy brain:
Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist,
As a lake, paving, in the morning sky,
With azure waves which burst in silver light,
Some Indian vale.. Behold it, rolling on
Under the curdling winds, and islanding
The peak whereon we stand, midway, around,
Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests,
Dim twilight-lawns, and stream-illumined caves,
And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist;
And far on high the keen sky-cleaving mountains
From icy spires of sun-like radiance fling
The dawn, as lifted Ocean's dazzling spray,
From some Atlantic islet scattered up,
Spangles the wind with lamp-like water-drops.
The vale is girdled with their walls, a howl
Of cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines
Satiates the listening wind, continuous, vast,
Awful as silence. Hark! the rushing snow!
The sun-awakened avalanche! whose mass,
Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there
Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds
As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth
Is loosened, and the nations echo round,
Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.

THE CAVE OF DEMOGORGON

ASIA and PANTHEA.

Panthea. What veiled form sits on that ebon throne?
Asia. The veil has fallen.

Panthea. I see a mighty darkness
 Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom
 Dart round, as light from the meridian sun—
 Ungazed upon and shapeless; neither limb,
 Nor form, nor outline; yet we feel it is
 A living Spirit.

Demogorgon. Ask what thou wouldest know.

Asia. What canst thou tell?

Demogorgon. All things thou dar'st demand.

Asia. Who made the living world?

Demogorgon. God.

Asia. Who made all

That it contains? thought, passion, reason, will,

Imagination?

Demogorgon. God: Almighty God.

Asia. Who made that sense which, when the winds of
 Spring

In rarest visitation, or the voice
 Of one belovèd heard in youth alone,
 Fills the faint eyes with falling tears which dim
 The radiant looks of unbewailing flowers,
 And leaves this peopled earth a solitude
 When it returns no more?

Demogorgon. Merciful God.

Asia. And who made terror, madness, crime, remorse,

Which from the links of the great chain of things,
To every thought within the mind of man
Sway and drag heavily, and each one reels
Under the load towards the pit of death;
Abandoned hope, and love that turns to hate;
And self-contempt, bitterer to drink than blood;
Pain, whose unheeded and familiar speech
Is howling, and keen shrieks, day after day;
And Hell, or the sharp fear of Hell?

Demogorgon. He reigns.

Asia. Utter his name: a world pining in pain
Asks but his name: curses shall drag him down.

Demogorgon. He reigns.

Asia. I feel, I know it: who?

Demogorgon. He reigns.

Asia. Who reigns? There was the Heaven and Earth
at first,

And Light and Love; then Saturn, from whose throne
Time fell, an envious shadow: such the state
Of the earth's primal spirits beneath his sway,
As the calm joy of flowers and living leaves
Before the wind or sun has withered them
And semivital worms; but he refused
The birthrights of their being, knowledge, power,
The skill which wields the elements, the thought
Which pierces this dim universe like light,
Self-empire, and the majesty of love;
For thirst of which they fainted. Then Prometheus
Gave wisdom, which is strength, to Jupiter,
And with this law alone, "Let man be free,"
Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven.

To know nor faith, nor love, nor law; to be
Omnipotent but friendless is to reign;
And Jove now reigned; for on the race of man
First famine, and then toil, and then disease,
Strife, wounds, and ghastly death unseen before,
Fell; and the unseasonable seasons drove
With alternating shafts of frost and fire,
Their shelterless, pale tribes to mountain caves:
And in their desert hearts fierce wants he sent,
And mad disquietudes, and shadows idle
Of unreal good, which levied mutual war,
So ruining the lair wherein they raged.
Prometheus saw, and waked the legioned hopes
Which sleep within folded Elysian flowers,
Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms,
That they might hide with thin and rainbow wings
The shape of Death; and Love he sent to bind
The disunited tendrils of that vine
Which bears the wine of life, the human heart;
And he tamed fire which, like some beast of prey,
Most terrible, but lovely, played beneath
The frown of man; and tortured to his will
Iron and gold, the slaves and signs of power,
And gems and poisons, and all subtlest forms
Hidden beneath the mountains and the waves.
He gave man speech, and speech created thought,
Which is the measure of the universe;
And Science struck the thrones of earth and heaven,
Which shook, but fell not; and the harmonious mind
Poured itself forth in all-prophetic song;
And music lifted up the listening spirit

Until it walked, exempt from mortal care,
Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound;
And human hands first mimicked and then mocked,
With moulded limbs more lovely than its own,
The human form, till marble grew divine;
And mothers, gazing, drank the love men see
Reflected in their race, behold, and perish.
He told the hidden power of herbs and springs,
And Disease drank and slept. Death grew like sleep.
He taught the implicated orbits woven
Of the wide-wandering stars; and how the sun
Changes his lair, and by what secret spell
The pale moon is transformed, when her broad eye
Gazes not on the interlunar sea:
He taught to rule, as life directs the limbs,
The tempest-wingèd chariots of the Ocean,
And the Celt knew the Indian. Cities then
Were built, and through their snow-like columns flowed
The warm winds, and the azure aether shone,
And the blue sea and shadowy hills were seen.
Such, the alleviations of his state,
Prometheus gave to man, for which he hangs
Withering in destined pain: but who rains down
Evil, the immedicable plague, which, while
Man looks on his creation like a God
And sees that it is glorious, drives him on,
The wreck of his own will, the scorn of earth,
The outcast, the abandoned, the alone?
Not Jove: while yet his frown shook Heaven, ay,
when
His adversary from adamantine chains

Cursed him, he trembled like a slave. Declare
Who is his master? Is he too a slave?

Demogorgon. All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil:

Thou knowest if Jupiter be such or no.

Asia. Whom callest thou God?

Demogorgon. I spoke but as ye speak,
For Jove is the supreme of living things.

Asia. Who is the master of the slave?

Demogorgon. If the abysm
Could vomit forth its secrets. . . . But a voice
Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless;
For what would it avail to bid thee gaze
On the revolving world? What to bid speak
Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance, and Change? To these
All things are subject but eternal Love.

Asia. So much I asked before, and my heart gave
The response thou hast given; and of such truths
Each to itself must be the oracle.

One more demand; and do thou answer me
As mine own soul would answer, did it know
That which I ask. Prometheus shall arise
Henceforth the sun of this rejoicing world:
When shall the destined hour arrive?

Demogorgon. Behold!

Asia. The rocks are cloven, and through the purple
night

I see cars drawn by rainbow-wingèd steeds
Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands
A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight.
Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there,

And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars:
 Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink
 With eager lips the wind of their own speed,
 As if the thing they loved fled on before,
 And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright
 locks

Stream like a comet's flashing hair: they all
 Sweep onward.

Demogorgon. These are the immortal Hours,
 Of whom thou didst demand. One waits for thee.

Asia. A spirit with a dreadful countenance
 Checks its dark chariot by the craggy gulph.
 Unlike thy brethren, ghastly charioteer,
 Who art thou? Whither wouldst thou bear me? Speak!

Spirit. I am the shadow of a destiny
 More dread than is my aspect: ere yon planet
 Has set, the darkness which ascends with me
 Shall wrap in lasting night heaven's kingless throne.

Asia. What meanest thou?

Panthea. That terrible shadow floats
 Up from its throne, as may the lurid smoke
 Of earthquake-ruined cities o'er the sea.
 Lo! it ascends the car; the coursers fly
 Terrified: watch its path among the stars
 Blackening the night!

Asia. Thus I am answered: strange!

Panthea. See, near the verge, another chariot stays;
 An ivory shell inlaid with crimson fire,
 Which comes and goes within its sculptured rim
 Of delicate strange tracery; the young spirit
 That guides it has the dove-like eyes of hope;

How its soft smiles attract the soul! as light
Lures wingèd insects through the lampless air.

Spirit

My coursers are fed with the lightning,
They drink of the whirlwind's stream,
And when the red morning is bright'ning
They bathe in the fresh sunbeam;
They have strength for their swiftness I deem,
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

I desire: and their speed makes night kindle;
I fear: they outstrip the Typhoon;
Ere the cloud piled on Atlas can dwindle
We encircle the earth and the moon:
We shall rest from long labours at noon:
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

“LIFE OF LIFE”

Life of Life! thy lips enkindle
With their love the breath between them;
And thy smiles before they dwindle
Make the cold air fire; then screen them
In those looks, where whoso gazes
Faints, entangled in their mazes.

Child of Light! thy limbs are burning
Through the vest which seems to hide them;
As the radiant lines of morning
Through the clouds ere they divide them;

And this atmosphere divinest
Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.

Fair are others; none beholds thee,
But thy voice sounds low and tender
Like the fairest, for it folds thee
From the sight, that liquid splendour,
And all feel, yet see thee never,
As I feel now, lost for ever!

Lamp of Earth! where'er thou movest
Its dim shapes are clad with brightness
And the souls of whom thou lovest
Walk upon the winds with lightness,
Till they fail, as I am failing,
Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing!

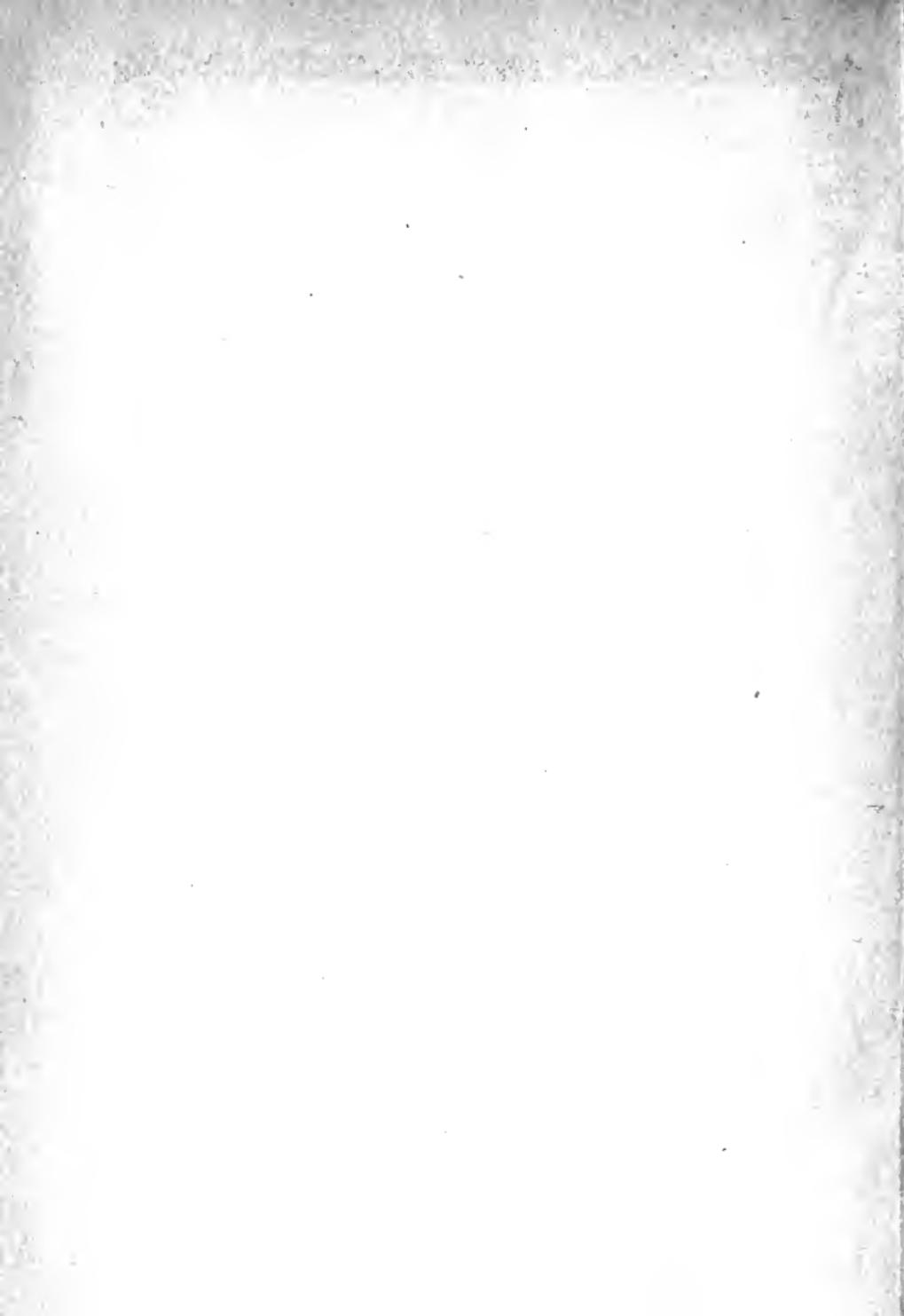
"ONE WORD IS TOO OFTEN PROFANED"

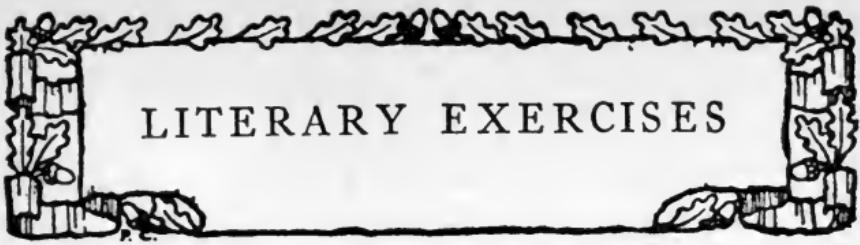
One word is too often profaned
For me to profane it,
One feeling too falsely disdained
For thee to disdain it.
One hope is too like despair
For prudence to smother,
And pity from thee more dear
Than that from another.

I can give not what men call love,
But wilt thou accept not
The worship the heart lifts above,
And the heavens reject not:
The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow.



LITERARY EXERCISES





LITERARY EXERCISES

I. Locate the following passages:

- (1) and then there crept
A little noiseless noise among the leaves,
Born of the very sigh that silence heaves.
- (2) Glory and Loveliness have pass'd away;
For if we wander out in early morn,
No wreathed incense do we see upborne
Into the east to meet the smiling day.
- (3) Of fair-haired Milton's eloquent distress,
And all his love for gentle Lycid' drown'd,
Of lovely Laura in her light green dress,
And faithful Petrarch gloriously crown'd.
- (4) He mourns that day so soon has glided by,
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.
- (5) Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen.
- (6) The poetry of earth is never dead.
- (7) O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene.
- (8) I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs.
- (9) Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
- (10) Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter.
- (11) "Beauty is truth, truth beauty"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

- (12) And there shall be for thee all soft delight
That shadowy thought can win,
A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
To let the warm Love in!
- (13) Rustle of the reaped corn;
Sweet birds antheming the morn.
- (14) Gone, the merry morris din;
Gone, the song of Gamelyn;
Gone the tough-belted outlaw
Idling in the "grené shawe."
- (15) And sometime like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.
- (16) —Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu.
- (17) No breakfast had she many a morn,
No dinner many a noon,
And, 'stead of supper, she would stare,
Full hard against the moon.
- (18) I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.
- (19) She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,
Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue;
Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson-barr'd.
- (20) Parting they seem'd to tread upon the air,
Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart
Only to meet again more close, and share
The inward fragrance of each other's heart.

- (21) A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
 Its loveliness increases; it will never
 Pass into nothingness.
- (22) O magic sleep! O comfortable bird,
 That broodest o'er the troubled sea of the mind
 Till it is hush'd and smooth!
- (23) Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
 Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
 Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
 Sat grey-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone.
- (24) In honoured poverty thy voice did weave
 Songs consecrate to truth and liberty.
- (25) Is this the scene
 Where the old Earthquake-dæmon taught her young
 Ruin?
- (26) O, Wind,
 If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?
- (27) And the beasts and the birds and the insects were drown'd
 In an ocean of dreams without a sound.
- (28) I sift the snow on the mountains below,
 And their great pines groan aghast;
 And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
 While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
- (29) I dreamed that, as I wandered by the way,
 Bare Winter suddenly was changed to Spring.
- (30) He who taught man to vanquish whatsoever
 Can be between the cradle and the grave
 Crowned him the King of Life.
- (31) Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
 He hath awakened from the dream of life.
- (32) Evil minds
 Change good to their own nature.

2. Compare the following Wordsworthian and Miltonic sonnets with one by Keats and one by Shelley from the point of view of structure—arrangement of lines, stressed syllables, and rhymes.

It is not to be thought of that the flood
 Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
 Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
 Hath flow'd, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood,"—
 Roused though it be full often to a mood
 Which spurns the check of salutary bands,—
 That this most famous stream in bogs and sands
 Should perish; and to evil and to good
 Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
 Armoury of the invincible knights of old:
 We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
 That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
 Which Milton held.—In everything we are sprung
 Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

WORDSWORTH.

ON HIS BLINDNESS

When I consider how my light is spent
 Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
 And that one talent which is death to hide,
 Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
 To serve therewith my Maker and present
 My true account, lest He returning chide;
 "Doth God exact day-labour, light-denied?"
 I fondly ask; but Patience, to prevent
 That murmur, soon replies: "God doth not need
 Either man's work, or His own gifts; who best
 Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best: His state
 Is kingly; thousands at His bidding speed,
 And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
 They also serve who only stand and wait."

JOHN MILTON.

3. Rossetti says that "a sonnet is a moment's monument," *i.e.* commemorates and embalms a momentary impression. Apply this to the sonnets of Keats and Shelley.

4. Which do you consider the most beautiful lyric of (1) Keats, (2) Shelley?

5. Try to trace the thread of thought running through *The Sensitive Plant*. Remember that critics have differed widely as to the interpretation of the poem.

6. Read the Introduction to this book again, with a view to testing the opinions in the light of your fuller knowledge of the poems.

7. A critic says of Shelley's lyric *One word is too often Profaned* (p. 245), that it is "far removed from the conventional love-poem and is of a sentiment rarefied and ethereal. It breathes an Alpine air . . . winds austere and pure blow through it and give it atmosphere, give it the breath of life." Test this opinion by careful pondering over the poem.

8. Which do you consider the most beautiful stanzas in *Adonais*?

9. What is the central idea of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*?

10. Contrast Keats and Shelley from the point of view of emotional force. Each poet had a ruling passion. What was it in each case?

11. In *terza rima* the line is iambic and decasyllabic except where a "feminine" rhyme lengthens it by a syllable. The first and third lines rhyme, the middle line of each triplet rhyming with the first and third of the next. A final couplet is added to rhyme the last "middle" at the close of a short poem and of

each section of a longer one. The closing section of Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* is a superb example.

S. GERTRUDE FORD, *Lessons in Verse Craft*.

Study the above explanation in connection with Shelley's poem.

12. Sir William Watson calls blank verse "that noble and distinctively English possession . . . a more perfect vehicle of thought and feeling than even the great metre of antiquity (*i.e.* the line of six feet)." Study the following examples:

It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
No nightingale: look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east:
Night's candles are burnt out and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops:
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

SHAKESPEARE.

Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clanged round him as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dirt of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

TENNYSON.

Find examples of unrhymed lines of this kind in Shelley and Keats and test their use of this measure by the above expression of opinion.

13. Study the rhyme plan in Keats's *To Autumn* (p. 60), and in Shelley's *To a Skylark* (p. 149).

14. In what way does the metre and stanza of *To a Skylark* suit the subject-matter of the poem?

15. Give instances of Shelley's feeling of kindness and brotherhood towards other poets.

16. Compare Keats's sonnet to Homer with Shelley's sonnet to Wordsworth.

17. Consider Keats's lines:

Who found for me the grandeur of the ode,
Growing, like Atlas, stronger from its load.

Which of the odes in this book are poems of grandeur and majesty?

18. Show from Keats's opening lines of *Endymion* and Shelley's *Song* (p. 169) that the two poets had a common source of delight.

19. Prove from the selections in this book that Keats was more personal and human in his affections than Shelley.

20. Compare the structure of the following Spenserian stanza with that of the stanza of *Adonais*:

The joyous birds, shrouded in cheerful shade,
Their notes unto the voice attempered sweet;
The angelical soft trembling voices made
To the instruments divine respondant meet;
The silver-sounding instruments did greet
The low bass murmur of the water's fall;
The water's fall with difference discreet,
Now loud, now soft, unto the wind did call;
The gentle warbling wind low answered to all.

21. The ode has two forms: one which may be written in any lyric metre; one in verse irregularly rhymed and in lines of varying length, after the manner of Pindar—hence called Pindaric.

In all odes, lyric or Pindaric, one primary condition must be observed. Things or persons must be *apostrophised*, not written

about but written *to*; addressed as if actually present, audient, visible, as they should in fact be to the poet's imagination. The ode's true reason for existence is that exalted mood, that intensity of emotional activity, which conjures up before the mental eye things unseen by the physical; gives life to dead matter and sentience to the insentient; makes, in a word, the things that are not as if they were.

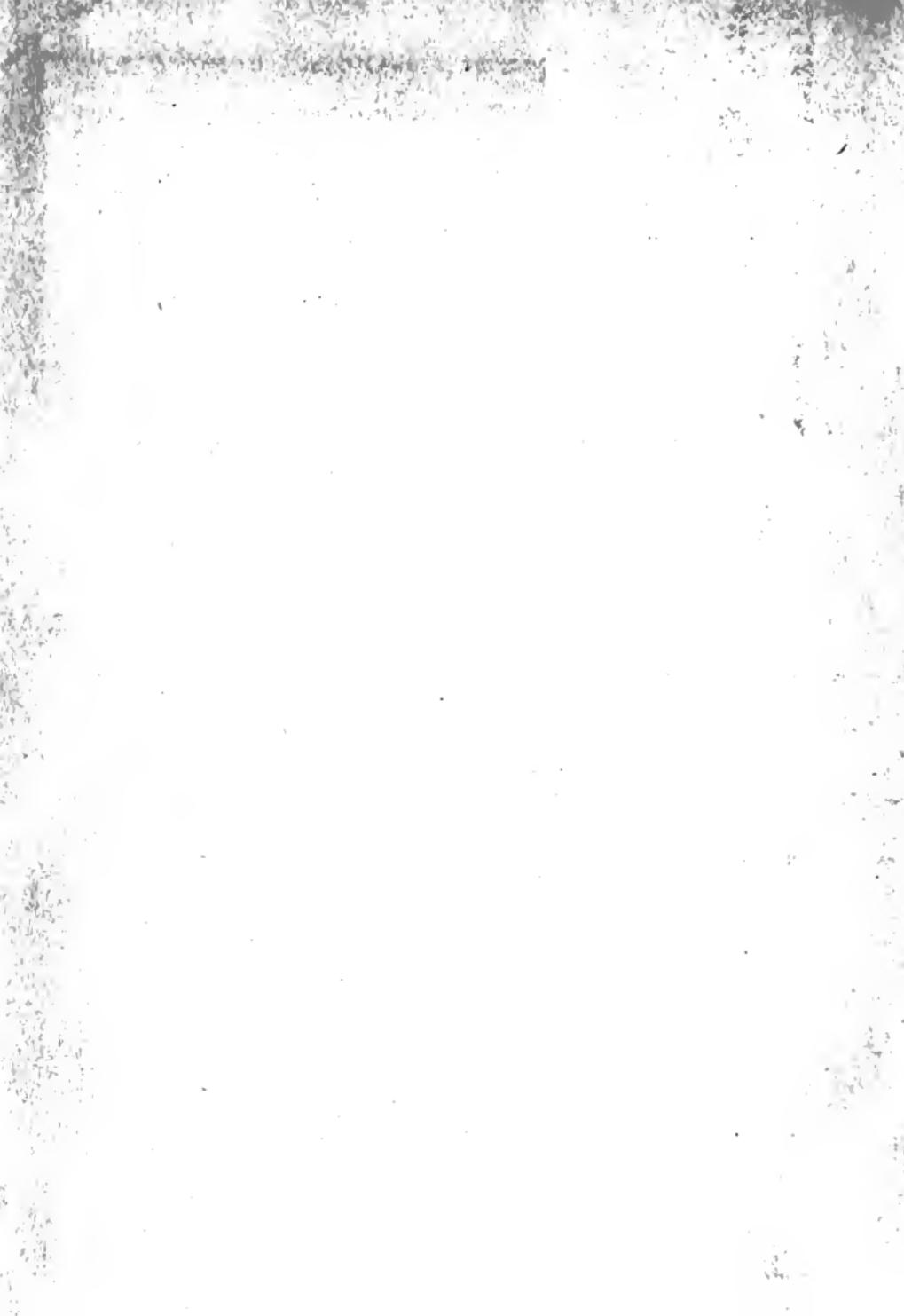
Apply these notes to some of the odes in this book.

22. Select at random a few pages of each poet and study:

- (1) his use of epithets or adjectives;
- (2) his similes and the fount from which they are most often drawn;
- (3) his metaphors;
- (4) his expression of sense by sound.

23. Compare *A Summer Evening Churchyard* (p. 104) with Gray's *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*.

24. Investigate the meaning of the term *elegy* and apply your conclusions to *Adonais*. Is there anything distinctly personal in the poem?



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Selections from the poems of John Keats
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